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261
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263 The Firem
264 Grist to

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OR,

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	London.	*National, Boston,* 1842.	*Federal St., Boston,* 1846.	*Walnut St., Philadelphia.*	*Theatre Royal, Montreal,* 1855.
Sir William Daventry,..	Mr. W. Farren,	Mr. G. G. Spear,	Mr. H. Placide,	Mr. H. Placide,	Mr. W. R. Blake.
Earl of Stanmore,.....	" G. Vandenhoff,	" C. E. Muzzy,	" Gallagher,	" L. R. Shewell,	" Wallis.
Percy Ardent, ...	" C. Matthews,	" J. E. Murdock,	" H. W. Bland,	" H. A. Perry,	" G. W. Stoddart.
Major Bellamy Fuss,...	" Harley,	" C. W. Hunt,	" J. Brougham,	" W. A. Chapman,	" C. Hale.
Supple, *Attorney at Law,*	" Cooper,	" J. G. Cartlitch,	" W. A. Vache,	" Young,	———
Lenoir, *Valet to Stan.,..*	" A. Wigan,	" J. B. Booth, Jr.,	" D. Whiting,	" Vining Bowers,	" Peters.
Euston, *Servant to Sir W.*	" Hughes,	" Milot,	" Adams,	———	" Ringold.
Lady Daventry,.....	Mrs. Nisbett,	Mrs. Anderson,	Mrs. H. W. Bland,	Mrs. Duffield,	Miss K. Reignolds.
Norah O'Connor,.....	Mad. Vestris,	" F. Webster,	" G. Barrett,	Miss Lizzie Weston,	Mrs. Buckland.
Mrs. Comfort,.....	Mrs. Orger,	" Meer,	" W. H. Smith,	Mrs. John Sefton,	" Archbold.

	Metropolitan, Buffalo, 1856.	*Wallack's, N. Y.*	*Niblo's, N. Y.,* 1858.	*Varieties, N. Orleans,* 1859.	*Holiday Street, Baltimore,* 1860.
Sir William Daventry,..	Mr. H. Placide,	Mr. W. R. Blake,	Mr. W. R. Blake,	Mr. H. Placide,	Mr. Charles Hill.
Earl of Stanmore,.....	" C. Copland,	" Dyott,	" Canoll,	" A. H. Davenport,	" B. T. Ringold.
Percy Ardent, ...	" C. Barton Hill,	" J. Lester Wallack,	" A. H. Davenport,	" Geo. Jordon,	" C. Barton Hill.
Major Bellamy Fuss,...	" B. Rogers,	" C. Walcott.	" J. Brougham,	" J. E. Owens,	" W. Scallan.
Supple, *Attorney at Law,*	" Ross,	———	" J. S. Smith,	———	" N. C. Forester
Lenoir, *Valet to Stan.,..*	———	" Moore,	" Duncan,	" Plunkett,	" W. H. Leak.
Euston, *Servant to Sir W.*	———	" Young,	" Hurley,	" John Sefton,	" W. A. Howell
Lady Daventry,.....	Miss Alice Gray,	Mrs. Sloan,	Miss Ada Clifton,	Mrs. Boyce,	Miss Alice Gray.
Norah O'Connor,.. ..	———	" Hoey,	Miss Miller,	Miss Susan Denin,	Mrs. C. Henri.
Mrs. Comfort,.....	———	" Vernon,	Mrs. W. R. Blake,	Mrs. John Sefton,	Miss Mary Carr

Guests, &c.

Scene: London — West End. Time: The present.

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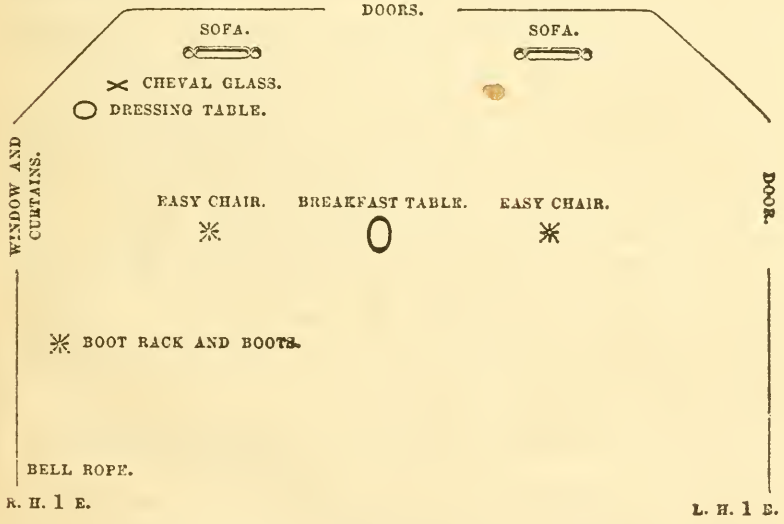
WEST END.

ACT I.

A MAYFAIR MÉNAGE, OR BACHELORS AT HOME.

A Dressing-room in EARL OF STANMORE'S *House, in Park-street. — Breakfast is laid* C. *— The furniture, &c., of the apartment betoken elegance, taste, and ease, without being rich. — Two easy chairs on either side of table, covered with flower chintz. — Postman's knock heard,* L. H.



Enter LENOIR, *with letters on a salver,* D. L. H.

Lenoir (*seating himself*). Lord Stanmore n'est pas encore get ups ! Half past ten ! Oh, mais ! but I wish I was again in France. I always dream of Paris ; and when I wake, diable ! I find myself in dis miserable London. I nevair see place so sans sentiment, point de morale. I love de morale ! Par example, milor owe me twelve years' vages ; still I remain his valet, — voilà le sentiment. He never con-

sider how I am to live; and it is as much as I never can do to make an honest livelihood out of the loose change he leave in his pockets, — voilà la morale! — n'importe, — virtue is its own reward. I nevair complain. Oui, honesty is de bess politics!

Enter EARL STANMORE, C. D. — LENOIR *arranges table, &c., and offers newspapers.*

Bon jour, monsieur.

Stanmore. Any letters? (*Yawning*) Aw — aw —

Le. Three, monsieur.

Stan. (*sitting down to breakfast*). Read them.

Le. (*opens one, and reads*). "*Sir, I have called several times on you*" —

Stan. Ah! I know what's coming.

Le. (*reading*). "*Without receiving the amount of my small bill*" —

Stan. Tradesmen were created for our sins!

Le. (*reading*). "*Having a large sum to make up by next*" —

Stan. That will do. — Go on with the next. Stay; who is that from?

Le. Kersey & Seame, your lordship's tailors.

Stan. It would appear they had called before.

Le. Oh, oui, — twenty times. Now that I begin to know their knocks, I nevair answer them.

Stan. And pray, sir, why were they not shown up? Do you wish to ruin my reputation?

Le. "Shown up!" But I thought milor had no — money.

Stan. What has that to do with it? Lenoir, Lenoir, I fear you are getting into low habits. Are you so ignorant of your duty and my respectability as to permit any tradesmen to leave my door *unsatisfied?* Have all my lessons been thrown away upon you?

Le. Pardon, milor; but I —

Stan. Listen, sir, and remember. Whenever you owe a debt, never shirk your creditor; — seek, rather than shun him. Entreat, nay, command him to send in his account. He won't; then go and abuse him for his negligence; — say you never run bills, &c. &c. When he discovers all this (which in time he will), and you have good grounds to suppose that he intends to present his bill — cork him with a large order. Now you may go on with the next.

Le. What beautiful natural philosophy! I shall cork my tailor.

Stan. I've made man, in his creditorial capacity, a careful study. Proceed.

Le. I am a child in the hands of milor. (*Opens another letter, and reads*) "*My dearest William*" —

Stan. (*starting up*). From Kate! What can she mean by thus annoying me?

Le. She has too much sentiment, and too little moralité.

Stan. (*taking letter, and reading*). "*My dearest William, why did you promise to return, without the slightest intention of keeping your word? Do you quite forget one who has sacrificed all, all, for your sake?*" My poor Kate! Forget you! — would to Heaven I could! (*Reads*) "*My father, whom I have not seen for some years,*

has suddenly requested my presence in London. What shall I do? I dare not meet him, if you still persist in keeping our marriage secret. To-morrow I will set out for town. Expect me in Park-street by ten o'clock. Be there to meet me, dearest William! The children long to see you, but not more eagerly than your affectionate wife, Kathe rine Daventry." My poor Kate! fate compels me to desert you.

Le. Oui, milor, it is all dat dam "*fate's*" fault.

Stan. Lenoir, you must await this lady's arrival, and conduct her to apartments as far from this as possible. Make some excuse for my absence: say I am — I — oh, I rely on your moralité to invent some rascally lie; — only keep her away; for her presence just now would be destruction to my dearest hopes!

Le. I will tell her she is too much — de trop — she is one over —

Stan. No; for remember, she imagines herself to be my wife —

Le. Diable! c'est vrai.

Stan. Measures must be taken to get her out of London again, as soon as possible. In the mean time, what 's in that third envelope?

Le. (*opening a third letter, and reading*). "*Crockford's, half past four, morning*" —

Stan. (*taking letter, and reading*). "*My dear Stanny, I have the most particular business to consult you upon. Be at home at twelve o'clock this morning; — mind, be sure. Yours, very muzzy, Percy Ardent.*" How very awkward! — I expect Supple, my man of business, every moment. I despatched him to Ireland, to sell the goods and movables of my estate there. I expect him every moment, with the proceeds. Perhaps I can get rid of him before Ardent's arrival. (*A knock*, L. H.) There he is. [*Exit* LENOIR, D. L. H. Money! money! it flies quicker than love. Five years ago my father died, leaving me heir to a very gentlemanly set of tradesmen, the compound interests of his debts, and his blessing. However, I was deuced glad to merge the tottering credit of the young Viscount Daventry in the Earldom of Stanmore; and amongst other conveniences appertaining to my change of name, it may enable me to escape detection by Kate. She will not know me, in my new robes and title.

Reënter LENOIR, D. L. H.

Le. Mr. Supple, milor. [*Exit*, D. L. H.

Enter SUPPLE, D. L. H.

Supple (L. H., *bowing low*). May I venture to hope that your lordship is quite well?

Stan. (R. H.) Quite well. Have you breakfasted?

Sup. Thank you, I never mix business and pleasure.

Stan. Pray take a seat.

Sup. Your lordship does me too much honor. (*They sit at table;* SUPPLE *with servility.*)

Stan. Now, then, what did the property fetch?

Sup. Nothing, my lord.

Stan. How?

Sup. Gently; I thought it better to consult, before I sold —

Stan. Consult!

Sup. Before I sold what did not quite belong to your lordship.

Stan. What do you mean?

Sup. Permit me to entreat your patience.

Stan. The Daventry Estates not mine! Pooh! — nonsense! — Whose, then?

Sup. You will perceive it, if I may take the liberty —

Stan. Proceed.

Sup. With submission, always —

Stan. I 'll excuse your deference, for brevity.

Sup. (*taking out and referring to pocket-book*). I was deputed by you to dispose of —

Stan. (*impatiently*). I know, I know. Come to the point at once

Sup. My dear lord, the law never does. On arriving on the premises, I proceeded to examine the goods, chattels, &c. &c. Every chamber was shown to me, without reserve or hesitation, but your father's, which was locked. I demanded the key ; it could not be found. The door was accordingly broken open, and amongst its contents, was an Indian cabinet —

Stan. Ay, I remember it.

Sup. Locked, also ; in which, on opening, I discovered, partly by chance, a secret drawer, containing a packet of letters from Lady Daventry, your mother, to your father —

Stan. You read them?

Sup. You desired me to examine everything.

Stan. Well?

Sup. They contained a full and complete avowal — pardon me — of your illegitimacy.

Stan. What, mine? Impossible!

Sup. The sweetest proofs I ever read! — as clear as the Bill of Rights.

Stan. I 'm thunderstruck! Where are these letters?

Sup. I crave pardon once again. I restored them to the cabinet, and obeying strictly your commands (finding that, although the title and estate descended to the real heirs, the goods and chattels were left to you, especially, by will), I sold them by auction.

Stan. And who bought the cabinet?

Sup. I did, and all that it contained.

Stan. I see. (*They eye each other significantly*).

Sup. Your father, the old earl, had a twin-brother, Lord Daventry, who was disowned for marrying a Miss O'Connor ; and being driven by necessity from this country, he assumed his wife's name, and accepted a commission in the Bengal army, in which service he died, leaving his widow and one child, Miss Norah O'Connor. Now, as your title and estates descend by the female line, this child, your first cousin, is heiress-at-law to your father, and Countess of Stanmore in her own right.

Stan. And you mean to proclaim it, I suppose?

Sup. Nay, I am your lordship's most devoted servant to command, and need never discover the existence of such papers in *my* cabinet, till you desire it. (*A pause.*)

Stan. For what sum will you destroy them?

Sup. 'T would be a felony.

Stan. True ; I had forgotten (*Aside*) What shall I do? I 'll try

a ruse. Well, sir, I must see these documents ; and should they prove genuine I shall feel in honor bound to surrender a title to which I can have no right ; and no longer retain estates to which I never had a claim. That is my decision, — my fixed determination. (*A long pause.* — SUPPLE *examines* STANMORE'S *face intently, and gradually relaxes into a smile. Aside*) The rascal knows me ! (*Aloud*) Ahem ! where is this girl ?

Sup. On her mother's late death she was left to the guardianship of her cousin, Sir William Daventry, with whom she now resides.

Stan. Indeed ! I saw Lord Daventry at a ball, last night, and he did not mention it or introduce me. To be sure, he was so absorbed in his new and young wife's flirtations. (*A double knock*, L H.) That 's Ardent. Pardon me, my dear sir ; — I am unavoidably engaged. We will talk over this point another time. (*Rings bell*, R. *wing. Aside*) And it will give me time to consider.

Sup. You will find I have lodged eight hundred pounds to your credit, at your banker's. I wish you a very good morning.

[*Exit*, D. L. H.

Stan. Now, am I not an unlucky devil ? What 's to be done ? My debts are twenty thousand, and my credit — eight hundred. That 's two-pence in the pound. Then, illegitimate ! If Supple will only keep it quiet I might retrench. Ay, but where ? Could I put down my cab, — enter a drawing-room out of a patent-safety, with a surreptitious straw turning king's evidence, in one's strap ? Jamais ! — I could sell this house and furniture. No, I forgot, — I 've done that already. Well, no matter, — I 've not paid for them ; so the second purchaser will get quite as much as the first. These are desperate expedients ; but what 's to be done ? Oh, I see what it will all end in ; — I shall become reckless ; — I shall lose all kind of moral feeling, and in a moment of temporary insanity I shall marry. Marry ! — why should I not marry Norah herself ? Egad ! I 'll try, under any circumstances. Let me see ; — there 's Mrs. Comfort, a rich widow, — worth a plum ; but she has had one husband, and looks a long-liver. Oh, that I could stumble on something rich and consumptive ! I 'd take it to winter in Norway.

Enter ARDENT, *hastily*, D. L. H. — *He throws himself into a chair, out of breath.*

Now, then, what scrape has your hot head run you into ? — anything serious ?

Ardent. My dear fellow, I want your assistance and advice.

Stan. You shall have them. Any quarrel ?

Ar. You were at Lady Melton's, last night ?

Stan. Well.

Ar. You saw her there ?

Stan. Her ! Who ? — that black-eyed girl you were whisking round the room all night ?

Ar. Exactly. You remember her ?

Stan. Well, what of her ?

Ar. I 'm done up, Stanmore, seriously.

Stan. How so ?

Ar. Look here ! (*Pulls out a letter.*) Here 's a signal gun to her

Stan. What, to a girl you saw for the first time last night !

Ar. Oh, she 's one of those that don't want to be known long. But never fear ; you 'll find I 've made up for the brevity of our acquaintanceship, by a squeeze of respect. Listen. Ahem ! (*Reads*) "*Crockford's. Madam*" — That 's distant. (*Reads*) "*You will doubtless be surprised, but I hope not offended, by receiving this deferential address, from one whom you cannot but look upon as a stranger. If unacceptable, pardon it as a mere madness, rather than condemn it as a wanton insult.*" You perceive that 's an offshot of the sublime and beautiful. Now I glide out of that style, and you 'll find I get a little warmer. (*Reads*) "*Loveliest of created beings, I adore you to distraction !*" Oh ! what a relief it was when I came to that ! (*Reads*) "*Give me back my heart, or, as you have it, keep it now, and take the rest*" —

Stan. A rat ! a rat ! "Maid of Athens," Byron !

Ar. What ! you 've found it out, have you ? Well, but wait. (*Reads*) "*How helplessly I yield it up to you ! I would say more if I had more to say.*" All that 's mine, and quite original (*Reads*) "*Your devoted and distracted Percy Ardent.*" Now, I want your candid opinion on that. Stay, shall I read it again ?

Stan. No ; first tell me, who is the lady ?

Ar. Eh ?

Stan. What 's her name ?

Ar. Her name ! — a — she did n't mention that.

Stan. But you were introduced ?

Ar. Oh ! — formally ! — yes, I introduced myself ; but it never occurred to me to ask her name.

Stan. Where does she live ?

Ar. Don't know.

Stan. Write a letter, without knowing where it 's to go, or who it is to !

Ar. Well ! now I come to think — ha ! ha ! — it does appear odd ; but the instant I saw her I rushed up, — said something ! Ah ! —

Stan. Passionately, I 'll be sworn.

Ar. I think she observed it was very warm ; so I volunteered to procure an ice — got a smile — hazarded my arm — 't was taken — found she was Irish — a delicious little brogue — enough to swear by. Such naiveté — such wit — such — such everything ! Oh ! (*Falls back in ecstasies.*) I say, Stan, this is the real thing, is n't it ? I 'm in for it in earnest, this time, eh ?

Stan. I fear so. Go on, and don't be violent ; — calm your expressions.

Ar. I can't, I can't ; — I would if I could ; but I can't ! I danced with her — it was a waltz — oh ! where was I ? — it 's half way to heaven, the very thinking of it ! I can hardly recollect anything, but that she breathed love ! — and, heavens to think ! I had my arm round her waist for two minutes !

Stan. Twenty !

Ar. Was it ? Seemed two ; and oh ! such a waist ! — ye gods ! — not a pair of stays and a brickbat ; but yielding, heaving life ! And then, her hair ! — all the women abused her hair ; so you may safely swear it was superb ; — not a plastered dab on each cheek, but a wa-

fect Niagara of curls, black as Erebus, and softer than the sighs I breathed upon them! — lovely forehead, and such eyes! — oh! I thought I could look right into her heart, through those deep wells of liquid light. But her nose! — here, lend me a pencil, and I'll draw you her nose.

Stan. Hum! — has she money?

Ar. Money! Dam'me, Stanmore, what a fellow you are! I never thought of asking; — no, I did nothing but look, listen, and love!

Stan. Pooh! you are young. I see you have not been long in London.

Ar. Three weeks, yesterday, I was weaned from Alma Mater; — left St. John's with honors, and entered St. James's with glory!

Stan. The most recherché and aristocratic saints in the calendar! Well, during three weeks, there's not a pretty woman, from Regent Street to Hyde Park, who does not with justice boast a slice of your heart, and whom you have not been running after, crying out "Stop thief!"

Ar. I! —

Stan. They say you've married the sex, and sent round your heart in little bits, instead of bride-cake.

Ar. But I say, about this girl, though.

Stan. Well, we must discover who and what she is, and get an introduction formally; but pray do nothing rashly.

Ar. There's a good fellow —

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H.

Le. Major Fuss. [*Exit*, D. L. H.

Enter FUSS, D. L. H.

Fuss. Ah, boys, how are ye? (x *to* C.) I'm in a devil of a hurry. Never mind; — you haven't heard, have ye? — no, of course; how could ye, ha? Can either of you tell me where I can get a —

Stan. By the way, major, were you at Lady Melton's last night?

Fuss. Melton's; I've no doubt I was. Any relation to Melton Mowbray? Oh no, I forgot; that's a town.

Stan. Who was that girl Ardent was flirting with so eternally?

Ar. Ay, Fuss, do you know her name?

Fuss. Oh yes, I know her. Who is she?

Ar. Delicious hair; — dressed in white; — splendid figure!

Fuss. Splendid figure! You mean Mrs. Comfort?

Ar. Did you ever see me waltzing with an hour-glass?

Fuss. She doesn't belong to the — no. Oh! I know, — an Irish girl.

Ar. Exactly! very Irish.

Fuss. Oh, her name is — ah — um — oh! —

Ar. Yes, yes.

Fuss. She is related to a Lord Somebody Something, of Somewhere.

Ar. But her name?

Fuss. Her name is n't Vandeleur? nor Twiddy? nor What-d'ye-call-'em? nor —

Ar. Damn it, Fuss, I don't want to know what it is n't, but what it is!

Fuss. Precisely; but you will never find it, if you rummage my

memory in that careless way. Patience; I must turn over every name that I 've heard since hers — a — I have it!

Ar. Have you?

Fuss. Very nearly; — I had a nibble — a — Rorah — Norah —

Stan. O'Connor?

Fuss. That 's it! — Norah O'Connor! Somebody told you.

Stan. (*starting forward*). Impossible!

Fuss. I 'm certain.

Stan. (*aside*). The devil it is! I was going to help him to the very girl I intend for myself!

Fuss. Stay! Now I think of it, I have her in my pocket, — that is, her last dying — no, I mean her birth, parentage, and education. They are usually mixed up somehow. Here it is. (*Pulls out a satin reticule.*) Here! — No! I am commissioned to get this embroidered for Lady Gay Frippery. (*Pulls out two fans.*) Those are — let me see — no matter; — remind me to remember (*pulls out a shoe and a flower*) I 'm to get one of these modelled in wax for somebody — I forget who; and whether it is the shoe or the flower I can't at all remember. (*Pulls out a pocket-book.*) Here we are! Now, then.

Stan. (*aside*). This alarms me. (*Aloud*) Pray what induced you to make such particular inquiries?

Fuss. Mrs. What 's-her-name asked me to procure some information on the point, very fresh; and here it is — a — um —

Ar. (*snatching the book*). Here, allow me. (*Reads*) "*Miss Norah O'Connor, only daughter of Lord Edward Daventry and Miss O'Connor. Edward was disinherited — went off suddenly at Burthport, in the East Indies, of having his brains blown out, which killed him. She is second cousin and ward of Sir William Daventry, of Greenoaks; and first cousin to*" —

Fuss. No, no! Permit me — cousin — to — to the Earl of Stanmore —

Ar. Your cousin, Stan, — first cousin.

Fuss. I 'm just going to ride out there, and give them a call. They live at a villa at Fulham; and as I am going to a breakfast at Twickenham, to-night, at eight o'clock —

Ar. Why, Stanny and I are invited. I drive him down in my cab.

Fuss. I 'll take the Daventrys on the road.

Ar. Then, major, oblige me by delivering this letter, there 's a good fellow. (*Gives letter.*) I 'll do as much for you another time.

Fuss. What the deuce do you take me for, — a drunken orderly or a postman? Don't be mean; — pay it; it is only a penny.

Ar. But this contains so much that I fear to trust it to such a chance.

Fuss (*taking it*). Why, what 's in it?

Ar. My heart — my soul — my love — my all!

Fuss (*weighing it*). 'T is under the half-ounce.

Stan. (*aside*). It has no direction.

Ar. Take the first private opportunity to give it to her.

Stan. (*aside*). He has never told him who it is for. Ten to one Fuss will make some stupid blunder.

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H.

Le. Sir William Daventry! [*Exit*, D. L. H.

Enter SIR WILLIAM DAVENTRY, D. L. H.

Daventry. Aha! Stanmore, lad, I've found you out, you see. How are ye? How d' ye do, Fuss?

Stan. (x *to* DAVENTRY). Permit me to introduce you to Percy Ardent. Sir William Daventry, Percy Ardent, my friend — my cousin Daventry. (*They bow.*) By the way, how's my lady cousin?

Dav. Eh?

Stan. I forgot to offer you my congratulations.

Dav. What for?

Stan. Your marriage.

Dav. (L. C.) Ahem! — thank ye — same to you.

Stan. (R. C.) Indeed! on what?

Dav. On your celibacy, you dog!

Fuss (R. H.) Why now, Daventry, you are the last man I should have suspected of committing matrimony.

Dav. Possibly. I never suspected it myself till I saw my pipe at the back of the fire, my kennel sold, and my hunters turned to hacks.

Ar. (L. H.) I would n't have stood that.

Fuss. Nor I, by the eighteenth of June, eighteen hundred and fifteen!

Dav. Would n't you? Wait till a woman comes wheedling round you, with a face like a sieve of corn, and a halter behind her back. She slips it over your head in a jiffy, and then it 's no use kicking.

Stan. But how did it happen?

Fuss. Ay, how were you caught?

Dav. I have n't the remotest conception. People have been telling me, for the last thirty years, I ought to marry; but somehow it slipped my memory, till Kate Savage put me in mind of it. I don't know how it happened. — I have a confused recollection of blushes, and churches, and lawyers, and ale, and parsons, and punch, mixed up, till I could n't tell which was which. All I know is, I got very drunk, and very pathetic, and awoke the next morning with a devil of a headache, and — a wife.

Stan. But what on earth brought you to town?

Dav. My better half. Lady Daventry having heard me swear at a groom, and kick him out-o'-doors, discovered that I had a genius for Parliament. Did n't see it myself, but to satisfy Kate I put up for my own borough; and though there was no opposition, she insisted that it was necessary for me to have a poll, to give the independent electors the opportunity of getting drunk in the cause of liberty, and breaking one another's heads, for the general good, according to immemorial custom.

All. Ha! ha! ha!

Stan. How do you like London?

Dav. The place is well enough, but the people —

Ar. Well —

Dav. I'll leave them alone, and hope that they will return the compliment.

Fuss. Matrimony does not seem to agree with you.

Dav. I have one poor consolation: it can only happen once in my life.

Stan. Perhaps twice.

Dav. No, impossible; for I 've given my solicitor a power of attorney to take out a writ de lunatico inquirendo, if he ever hear of my doing so again.

Stan. Why did n't you introduce me to my cousin Norah, last night?

Dav. 'Pon my life, I can't remember.

Fuss That 's my way. I always — what d' ye call it —

Dav Ah! there 's a little emerald. If you had seen her when she came to Greenoaks, from Ireland! — as wild as an unbroken Arab! — free as the wind, and as lovely as — as herself! She beats everything else in nature, by — by —

Ar. The loveliest neck I ever looked at!

Dav. Nature seemed to have made her out of an April day. — There 's daylight in her smile, and evening's softest tinge sleeps on her cheek!

Ar. Hear! hear! hear! Sir William, you 'll be a great speaker! Just my feelings!

Dav. You admire my little Norah? Sir, give me your hand. — You are a devilish good-looking fellow, and a man of taste! (*They shake hands.*)

Ar. I am; and you are a man of discretion.

Dav. Let me tell you, sir, her heart is as good as her face!

Ar. Better! better!

Dav. Ah! I only wish my wife was like her.

Stan. Take care Mrs. Comfort does not hear you say so. 'T would be all over town that Lady Daventry was a wretched, ill-used woman. Remember, this place is a perfect hive of scandal!

Ar. And Mrs. Comfort aspires to the dignity of Queen Bee.

Stan. She flies round, full of buzz and honey.

Dav. And with enough sting for the whole hive.

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H.

Le. The Honorable Mrs. Bolton Comfort.

Dav. Let me out! (X L. H.)

Stan. I 'm not at home!

Le. She is waiting below, milor, in her carriage, for Major Fuss.

Dav. Hallo, major! [*Exit* LENOR, D. L. H.

Stan. Oh! I had forgotten. — She is a flame of Fuss's!

Ar. Now, my man of war!

Dav. To her!

Ar. Never say die!

Stan. Down with you, Fuss. Two to one on the widow! Come, Fuss, no shirking. (*Pushes him to* ARDENT, L. H.)

Ar. No hedging here! — A direct challenge! — No apology! (*Pushes him to* L. H. — FUSS *has tea-pot in his hand.* — *Wishes to return and replace it, but the party thrust him off* L. H., *with it still in his hand.*)

Dav. Go and be comforted!

All three. Ha! ha! ha!

ARDENT. STANMORE. DAVENTRY

QUICK DROP. — END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

A BOUDOIR. — THE MAID, THE WIFE, AND THE WIDOW.

LADY DAVENTRY'S *Boudoir.* — C. *doors, practical.* — *Door* R. H. 2 E. — *Door* L. H. 2 E.

Enter LADY *and* SIR WILLIAM DAVENTRY, D. R. H. 2 E.

Lady Daventry. Sir William Daventry, do you wish to make me the ridicule of all London? Dine at two o'clock! — Absurd! (*Sits.*)

Dav. But, my dear Kate, will you listen to reason?

Lady D. No!

Dav. I 'm hungry! — I 'm starving!

Lady D. Order lunch.

Dav. A water-biscuit and a calf's-foot jelly!

Lady D. You Goth! what brought you to town?

Dav. You did.

Lady D. Yes; but I never brought your boorish habits. I wonder you don't know better than to be hungry at such an hour!

Dav. I beg pardon. I sinned innocently. I was n't aware that fashion had repealed the laws of nature.

Lady D. There are some other matters in which you require reform.

Dav. Always delighted, my love, to —

Lady D. There! there! that 's it.

Dav. What, my soul?

Lady D. For Heaven's sake, let me entreat you not to "my love" and "my soul" me about the town. 'T is never done.

Dav. What, is connubial affection contraband, and seized at Hyde Park corner, as an illegal import?

Lady D. Yes. Oh! now I think of it, never ask me to dance, as you did last night. (*Eying him through her glass.*) 'Pon my life, you 're an original. Ha! ha! But, àpropos, allow me to abuse your toilette. Who 's your operator? (*Rises.*)

Dav. My valet, Bob. Old Bob has dressed me these I don't know how many years.

Lady D. We 'll discharge him.

Dav. No, damn me if I do! not for all the fashion in the world!

Lady D. Well, take another peruquier, and don't swear; it 's coarse!

Dav. Bob will do

Lady D. Bob! How often have I told you to call the servants by their surnames?

Dav. 'Pon my life, I did n't know they ever had any.

Lady D. Euston is his name. Your hair is worse than a cornfield, after a hurricane; and look at your cravat, — for all the world like a fancy halter; and your clothes — horrible! vile!

Dav. Good gracious! — dear me! — am I indecently clad?

Lady D. Worse, if possible. Your coat looks as if it had been cut out with a knife and fork, and thrown on with a shovel; and you 're not a bad figure, when "bien mis." Your trowsers shamefully sculp-

tured; — altogether, such a vulgar redundancy of cloth, that — ha! ha! — it really becomes a matter of curious speculation in what corner of that mis-shapen mass — ha! ha! that chaos! — the body of Sir William Daventry may be concealed.

Dav. Perhaps your ladyship can recommend me a tailor.

Lady D. I will make inquiries. In the meanwhile, have you carefully perused the book I gave you, — "Hints on Etiquette," — by some Latin or Greek man?

Dav. Yes, by a Go-Gos. It 's Greek.

Lady D. Well, let him be your master.

Dav. I have found a better.

Lady D. Indeed! Whom?

Dav. Nature! nature! who taught me that true politeness consists simply in true feeling; for a man who has a gentle heart himself will never wound his neighbor's wantonly.

Lady D. Hear! hear! hear! I would retail that at the next literary conversazione, if I could remember it.

Dav. Keep it for home use; and believe me, those who possess the old-fashioned piece of human furniture need not the study of a book to teach them kindly thoughts. Those who have it not of course must learn the rules by rote.

Lady D. That sounds well.

Dav. It does, and like a good instrument it will improve by practice. But now tell me, is there any other part of me which might provoke a critical censure from your ladyship? (*Turns round slowly, while* LADY DAVENTRY *eyes him through her glass, and walks round him.*)

Lady D. You will require complete regeneration. There is much to be done; though I fear you are too old to learn. One can't expect fifty years' country rust to be rubbed off by a week's town polishing.

Dav. (*seriously*). Kate, that is the most undeserved and unkindly word you have uttered since our marriage. I don't need your cool taunt to feel aware I am double your age. My mirror hourly says as much. Remember that you married me from choice; at least you said so; and the fault, if fault there be on either side, must be on yours; for years are no reproach, unless ill-spent. (*He turns away, and sits* R. H. — *A pause.* — *She approaches and puts her arm round his neck.*)

Lady D. Have I offended you?

Dav. No; you have hurt me. I love you too well to take offence.

Lady D. I entreat your pardon, love. I would not wound your feelings for worlds; indeed, indeed, I would not! I only spoke for your own sake. There 's a little difference between our ages, as you well know there always should be, — always ten years, at least; — fifteen I think better. Now, as I am twenty-eight —

Dav. No; twenty-two.

Lady D. No, really; — and you are forty-five —

Dav. Fifty! fifty! every hour!

Lady D. You are not.

Dav. I am.

Lady D. I say you are not!

Dav. (*aside*). She has a good heart, and damn me, they shan't spoil it! (*Rises.*)

Lady D. Well, I would not have that difference, trifling as it may be, remarked or pointed at.

Dav. Who cares? Let them point.

Lady D. To oblige me.

Dav. My own dear — (*Catching himself.*) Beg pardon!

Lady D. Call me Kate, or what you please.

Dav. Well then, Kate, I have a favor to ask of you.

Lady D. It shall be granted.

Dav. May I request that you will not waltz?

Lady D. Not waltz! — what! — why not?

Dav. Why, you see — after all — when you come to consider that I — you — (*Breaking out*) Damn me! I don't like to see another man with his arms round my wife's waist, whisking round, to an infernal see-saw, donkey-braying tune!

Lady D. Are you mad?

Dav. No, but I thought you were.

Lady D. Give me patience! Sir William Daventry, you're a fool!

Dav. Perhaps I am, Lady D.; and better that than —

Lady D. What, sir?

Dav. Ahem! No matter; only I should like to remain as nature made me, — that's all. (x *to* L. H.)

Lady D. Dine at one, dress like a Quakeress, and not waltz! — I should like to know what Mrs. Comfort would say?

Dav. Confound that horrid woman!

Lady D. Horrid woman, Sir William! She is the Lady-patroness of Almack's, and haut ton! She keeps two secretaries and a publisher; writes novels, bound in peach-colored silk, and a wreath of laurel, — "Deprivation, or Tears from a Widow!" She is crême de la crême. Moreover, she has a hundred thousand pounds!

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Euston. Mrs. Bolton Comfort. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Dav. Now for a flood of hyperbolics! She will distrain heaven itself to furnish her greeting! (x *to* R. H.)

Enter MRS. COMFORT, D. L. H. 2 E.

Mrs. C. My beautiful angel! you look lovelier than yourself, this morning! and last night I should have deemed that impossible. Ah! Sir William Daventry, I hear of you everywhere! The town is on the qui vive to hear you in the House! On what question do you come out? St. Stephen is in a fever! But, dear me! where is Fuss? He arrived with me.

Lady D. Apropos, who is Fuss?

Mrs. C. Ay, who is Fuss? Every one has asked the same question for the last hundred years! Everybody knows him. He had a cornetcy in the Guards during the Middle Ages; exchanged it for majority, in the North-east Bungay Indefencibles, or Indispensables, I forget which; so does he, I believe — ha! ha! Poor dear old soul! I pet him; he has two thousand a year!

Dav. Ah! that's a very redeeming quality!

Enter FUSS, D. L. H. 2 E.

Mrs. C. Yes, he 's a horrible bore ! — but you know I am good-natured to a fault — Ah ! (x *to* L. C.) My dear major ! we were just saying what a delightful acquisition you are, now you are become one of us.

Fuss. I 'm overwhelmed ! Lady Daventry, I still live the most prostrate of your incalculable adorers ! Bless me, what a lovely spot ! — quite a paradise ! — as if created for its lovely mistress !

Dav. (*aside*). More honey for the hive.

Fuss. Here 's an exquisite spot ! Ah ! rather far from town, though ; (*aside*) and just outside a three-penny turnpike !

Lady D. It is Sir William's choice.

Fuss. Which must be super-excellent ! else had you not been the lovely Lady Daventry.

Dav. (*aside*). That fellow is a perfect bombshell of sweet nothings.

Mrs. C. I was just remarking to Sir William Daventry, major, that he is quite a lion, since he has become one of us.

Dav. One of us ! What a horrid expression ! Such a regimental idea. Does she belong to us? Is she of ours? This morning, as I was walking in the garden, I saw my next door neighbor, over the paling ; so I said, "How d' ye do? Fine morning. Good day." That was all. Well, my Lady D., there, overheard me, and I got half an hour's lecture ; and why ? Because he did n't "belong to us."

Mrs. C. What a droll man you are ! You amuse me, positively.

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Eus. Earl of Stanmore and Mr. Ardent. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Enter STANMORE *and* ARDENT, D. L. H. 2 E.

SITUATIONS.

R. H. *Sir William. Lady D. Mrs. C. Fuss. Stan. Ardent.* L. E.

Stan. My lovely cousin, your devoted.

Dav. Katherine, Mr. Ardent. (*Introduces them.*)

Lady D. (*aside to* MRS. COMFORT). Do you know him?

Mrs. C. Intimately ; he has eight thousand a year.

Lady D. He is decidedly handsome.

Ar. But where is Norah?

Stan. (*aside*). Keep quiet.

Ar. I'll attack her ladyship, and get a general invitation to the house.

Lady D. By the bye, where is Norah?

Ar. Ah ! to be sure, by the bye, just what I was saying, — where is Norah?

Lady D. I was not aware, Mr. Ardent, that you knew Miss O'Connor.

Ar. O yes, I was introduced last night.

Mrs. C. By whom?

Ar. By whom, did you say? By whom? (*Aside to* STANMORE) By whom, eh?

Stan. (*aside*). Say Fuss.

Ar. O, ay — by Fuss.

Dav. By you, major?

Fuss. By me? Eh! did I? — I forgot — oh yes, yes — certainly.

Mrs. C. I did n't know you were acquainted with her.

Fuss. No more I am.

All. Ha, ha, ha! — Well done, major!

Mrs. C. Lady Daventry, my dear, remember that I came at your request, to take Norah to the breakfast at Twickenham, this evening. She is not ready, and I can't wait. (*Goes up.*)

Ar. There 's my cab, outside, that she can have, with pleasure.

Stan. (*aside*). Are you mad? What are you about?

Ar. (*aside*). But if she goes in Mother Comfort's trap, I can't see her, or chat on the road. Stop, I have it; I 'll send for my horse; then I can ride beside her. Splendid idea!

Lady D. Euston!

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Lady D. Where is Miss O'Connor?

Eus. She is dressing.

Mrs. C. Beg her to make haste.

Lady D. Order the phaeton round in twenty minutes.

Ar. And be so good as to tell my boy to drive home, leave the cab, and bring back my bay mare. Stay, I 'll write an order, for fear of any blunder. Stanmore, have you a slip of paper about you?

Stan. Will the back of this do? (*Gives a letter. Aside*) A billet-doux from my tailor.

Ar. Ha, ha!

Dav. Come, Stanmore; while Norah is dressing, I will ask your judgment on a brace of pointers I bought at Tattersall's, this morning. This way.

Stan. With pleasure. (*Aside*) I must direct Ardent's attack from Norah, by putting Daventry against him. I can easily make Fuss swear to all I say! (*Aloud*) Fuss, will you join us? Let us explore.

[*Exit* STANMORE, FUSS, *and* DAVENTRY, C. D., *talking and laughing.*

Ar. Here, you sir, give my boy this, and bid him touch and go.

[*Exit* EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

But stay, what is this? (*Reads*) "*My dearest William, why did you promise to return, without*" — And signed Kate Daventry. Really, I beg your ladyship's pardon. I see it is from you, to Sir William.

Lady D. Impossible, sir. I never had occasion to write to him.

Ar. Convince yourself. (*Gives letter, and exit,* C. D.)

Lady D. What can this mean? (*Reads*) "*My dearest William*" — Her dearest William! This can't be intended for him.

Mrs. C. Oh yes, it is. Where 's the direction? Torn off. Ah! for fear of accidents. Go on, love.

Lady D. Do you mean to say —

Mrs. C. I do. Go on. — I see it all; — the dear old man has been a little gay. Ah! husbands will be husbands. Read on.

Lady D. Do I dream?

Mrs. C. Oh no, you are quite awake, my dear — ahem! and so am I. Never mind it. Bless you, when my late poor dear Comfort used to visit his relations, for a week or two, I never troubled myself about the gender of his host, — never. But let us hear what the woman creature says. It may elicit an idea for my next work, — "Woman as she should n't be, or the Fatal Gift."

Lady D. (*reading*). "*My dearest William, why did you promise to return, without the slightest intention of keeping your word? Do you quite forget her who has sacrificed all, all, for your sake*" —

Mrs. C. Dear, dear! how it puts me in mind of poor departed Comfort! Ah, well! I 've done my duty. It cost me five hundred pounds to put him in the family vault; and that was a great relief to my feelings. But I beg pardon, — how does the letter work up?

Lady D. Is this possible?

Mrs. C. Possible! I 'll show you a muff-case full of Comfort's correspondence, which I keep as sad mementos of my loss.

Lady D. The wretched reprobate! let him look to himself!

Mrs. C. I 'd make him pay dearly for it.

Lady D. I will! I 'll be horribly revenged!

Mrs. C. Do; — demand a swingeing check, at once. He won't refuse it. Make him suffer, dear. Oh, how cautious poor dear Comfort became, in his latter days! But I retard the denouement. — There 's more, I hope.

Lady D. Merciful heavens! I am lost! — he is married!

Mrs. C. What!

Lady D. (*reading*). "*If you persist in keeping our marriage secret*" —

Mrs. C. Oh! Comfort never went so far as that.

Lady D. I 'm fainting!

Mrs. C. It will be thrown away, love. The men are not here

Lady D. Read, read! I cannot see!

Mrs. C. Poor dear! I foretold this, all along. Let me see — a — a — um. Comes to town to-morrow — meets him at ten o'clock, in Park-street. How odd! that was Comfort's street.

Lady D. And that was the reason the wretch would not take a house in town.

Mrs. C. A — um. It seems he has a family — a — a —

Lady D. A what?

Mrs. C. Nothing; only a family, dear. But with that you have nothing to do.

Lady D. O William!

Mrs. C. Why, you don't mean to say that you are in love with the man?

Lady D. No, I 'm not exactly.

Mrs. C. The ugly —

Lady D. He 's not! No, he 's a brute, but he 's not ugly.

Mrs. C. Old —

Lady D. Not forty.

Mrs. C. Why, he 's as gray as Chinchilla.

Lady D. That 's in his family. His hair turned at twenty.

Mrs. C. You foolish child, you do love him.

Lady D. (*haughtily*). Mrs. Bolton Comfort, that 's an insult!

Mrs. C. I beg your pardon, and withdraw the vile accusation. How odd! the letter is signed "Kate Daventry."

Lady D. Has the wretch married two Kates?

Mrs. C. (*looking at the letter*). Can I believe my eyes? The number in Park-street mentioned here is Stanmore's house!

Lady D. Would Lord Stanmore lend himself to such an act?

Mrs. C. Here he comes. We shall see.

Enter STANMORE, C. D. L. H.

Lady D. Lord Stanmore, have you given permission to my husband to make your house the rendezvous for a disgraceful assignation?

Stan. My house! — never! Assignation! with whom?

Lady D. Some person with whom he was acquainted previous to our marriage.

Stan. Sir William Daventry? Impossible! You wrong him.

Lady D. I have proofs.

Stan. My dear madam, they must be false.

Lady D. Are they? Read that. (*Places letter before his eyes.*)

Stan. The devil! (*Feeling in pocket, draws out another letter, and looks at it. Aside*) I gave Ardent the wrong letter, by Jove!

Lady D. Read it.

Stan. (*looking at letter*). Dear me! who would have thought it?

Lady D. Must not the object of that letter be a villain?

Stan. Horrible! (*Puts it in his pocket.*)

Lady D. No, give it back again, if you please. (*Takes letter.*) Thank you. Now, my husband will ask you for the loan of your house. Oblige me by giving it.

Mrs. C. What then?

Lady D. If he has dared to wrong me, as I suspect, I am determined to get from him —

Mrs. C. Damages!

Lady D. A deed of separation.

Mrs. C. You are mad, my love. Separation! What good will that do? You 'll be allowed five hundred a year. Comfort would have given his eyes to have pensioned me off; but I knew better; ha, ha! Why, now, observe; — you are separated; good. Do you think the world will inquire whose fault it is? Pooh! not a bit of it. Besides, you are young and lovely; he is shady; that will look odd. So your carriage, your diamonds, your pin-money, and all the rest of your appurtenances, too tedious to mention, go to the unlawful usurper. Pooh, pooh! I know the law on that point backwards. Bless your little puzzled head! don't put it into the noose. — That 's just what he 'd like.

Lady D. What can I do? Shall I show him the letter at once, and confound him?

Stan. On no account, my dear cousin. That would gain no end. He would deny it altogether, perhaps.

Mrs. C. Of course he would. Comfort always did.

Lady D. What shall I do? — what shall I do? Advise something horrible; because I feel as if I could do it.

Mrs. C. I don't altogether like that pretty Irish cousin of his. Cousins on a visit; — never knew good come of it.

Lady D. You don't mean to assert —

Mrs. C. No; but hint, my love; merely hint. If I were in your place I would request her to seek another asylum.

Lady D. But what cause can I give for abandoning the poor girl?

Mrs. C. Is she poor?

Lady D. Penniless.

Mrs. C. Oh! then you need not give her any cause at all. Poor! (SIR WILLIAM *and* ARDENT *laugh without*, C. D. L. H.) Hush! here comes Sir William. I will undertake to break the matter to dear Norah. She can go as governess or companion. I know a family in Baker-street that give thirty pounds per annum, and find new mourning twice a year.

Lady D. I don't know what I 'm doing. (X R. C.)

Stan. (*aside*). If all comes out, she can't say I joined in this deceit. No, but I could not criminate myself by owning the letter.

Enter SIR WILLIAM DAVENTRY *and* ARDENT, C. D. L. H. — *Enter* EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Eus. Your ladyship's phaeton is ready; Miss O'Connor waits in Mrs. Comfort's carriage; and Mr. Ardent, your horse has arrived.

[*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Lady D. Come, Mrs. Comfort.

Dav. Permit me to escort —

Lady D. (*drawing herself up*). Sir!

Dav. My love!

Lady D. (*aside to him*). Your love! Ha, ha! I despise a second hand affection! (X *to* L. H.)

Dav. Why, Kate!

Lady D. Lady Daventry, sir!

Ar. (*aside*). I 'll off to Norah.

Lady D. Mr. Ardent, oblige me with your arm.

Ar. Eh? Oh! (*Giving it. Aside*) How damned annoying!

Lady D. As you are going to the fête, I 'll drive you in my phaeton.

Ar. I shall feel delighted! (*Aside*) I 'm agonized! (*Aloud*) Then, Stanmore, as I brought you down in my cab, I leave my horse to you. At your ladyship's service. (*Aside*) I hope she will upset me.

[*Exit, with* LADY DAVENTRY, D. L. H. 2 E.

Mrs. C. She 'll do. The girl has spirit.

Dav. Mrs. Comfort, might I ask what 's the matter?

Mrs. C. We must leave an impression, without committing her. A little mystery will tell well here. (*Turns round, and looks sadly.*)

Dav. Ah! yes, I see. (MRS. COMFORT *shakes her head.*) Well?

[*Exit* MRS. COMFORT, D. L. H. 2 E.

Will anybody tell me what has happened?

Stan. I would not let her drive him, if I were you.

Dav. Why not?

Stan. Are you not aware he is called Lady Daventry's coach-dog?

Dav. No!

Stan. Follow her phaeton, passing.

Dav. Euston! (X *to* L. H.)

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Dav. Order me a horse! — order me two horses!

[*Exit* EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

I 'll — I 'll — oh! I knew what would be the consequences of coming up to town! [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Stan. Where the deuce is Fuss? Oh, he has been left somewhere, and has forgotten himself. Well, I will take his seat beside Norah. Euston!

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Tell Major Fuss my horse is at his service. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Enter FUSS, C. D. L. H.

Eus. Sir, your horse waits.

Fuss. My horse? You mean Mr. Ardent's or Lord Stanmore's.

Eus. No, sir; his lordship has gone in Mrs. Comfort's carriage.

Fuss. In my seat! The devil he has!

Eus. And requests you 'll make any use of Mr. Ardent's horse you please.

Fuss. Use! A major in the standing army outflanked by a fellow who does n't know a bombshell from a squib! Make any use of him I please! I 'll ring his metal! And the rascal has forgot to leave me the ticket of the turnpike. A premeditated insult. I 'll have him out! I 'll make him apologize, or, what d' ye call it.

[*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E., *followed by* EUSTON.

QUICK DROP. — END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

THE FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE. — LOVE IN AN ARBOR.

The Banks of the Thames, at Twickenham, discovering a set Villa, R. H., *and grounds laid out and illuminated for a fête champêtre. — Richmond Hill is seen at a distance. — Characters, guests, &c., promenading. — Music behind, on* R. H., *playing a quadrille. — Garden-seat on* L. H.

Enter STANMORE, *from pavilion*, R. H.

Stan. Matters are becoming more serious than I intended. Lady Daventry's open flirtations with Ardent are the talk of every one. Sir William is nearly at his wits end. I never foresaw this. However, what 's done is done; and I must back it up. Poor Percy, in an agony, watched Norah whisking round the room, in the rapid waltz, in every man's arms but his. (*Music ceases.*) By Jove! here he comes. How has he got rid of her ladyship?

Enter ARDENT, *from pavilion*, R. H.

Ar. Where is she?

Stan. Who? Lady Daventry?

Ar. 'Pon my life, it was too bad of you. Why did n't you come and pick me up? She has kept me all this time in a corner, pegging away at me with her matrimonial miseries, asking me if she was n't an angel, and —

Stan. Well?

Ar. Oh, of course I said yes, and wished her in heaven, with all my heart. Quadrille began at last; so I said I was engaged, and left her with an unfinished tale of her sorrows, "to be continued in our next," as the magazines have it. I say, what were you pouring into Norah's ear so passionately? I won't have it. Fair play. If you are going to enter the lists, and run for the Norah stakes, no sneaking.

Stan. I was raising you in her estimation, till you were nearly out of sight.

Ar. Oh! How do I stand?

Stan. The favorite; but she is as wild as an Arab.

Ar. Exactly; — stops for a moment — snuffs the air — tosses up her head, and on she goes again. I 've hopes, though.

Stan. Yes, but you are too modest.

Ar. Do you think so?

Stan. By half. Let me be your agent.

Ar. Thank ye all the same; but I like my love home-made.

Stan. As you please; but I thought a mutual confidant prevents quarrels, or cures them. Eh? I could prepare the way for you. How do you feel?

Ar. Like a boy lending another his apple, for a bite; — you might take a mouthful too much.

Stan. Did n't I introduce you?

Ar. You did, thank you; and you 've made me very miserable.

Stan. Why so?

Ar. I don't know, and I 'm out of breath with trying to find out. I 'm pent up, and yet free. I possess all the restrained agony, and wild, headlong temper of an indignant bottle of soda-water. I want to get out.

Stan. You are mad!

Ar. I look with fury on the passive indifference of humanity. The world is half asleep, and forgets to turn quick enough. I should like to see the sun running a race with its own shadow, and giving long odds and a start, — something whiz — quick! In fact I want a regular off-hand row in nature, to keep time with that in my heart!

Stan. (L. H.) What does Norah say to all this?

Ar. (R. H.) Oh, with her I am as tame as a pet poodle, and as grave as a parrot. (*Music behind* R. H. — *waltz, very piano.*)

Stan. Then here she comes, to take you down a peg.

Ar. Leave us, that 's a good fellow. I 'll do as much for you, another time. (X *to* L. H.)

Stan. (*aside*). I fear I have no chance. I 'll do the magnanimous. — I 'll send Mrs. Comfort. I know she is anxious to tell Norah Lady Daventry's wishes. As I see Norah is in love with Percy, I 'll give her up to him. Ah! I am too good-natured for this world! (*He goes up, and exit* R. H., *into pavilion.*)

Enter NORAH, R. H. 2 E.

Ar. My dear Miss O'Connor! I was seeking you.

Norah. Well, here I am. What do you want?

Ar. Nothing particular.

Nor. Then you are easily satisfied.

Ar. You are fond of waltzing.

Nor. It depends upon whom I am waltzing with. At present, I think this place cooler and pleasanter. (*Aside*) I could give another reason. — I 'd rather walk here with him than waltz with a dozen all at once. But however, I 'll keep that to myself.

Ar. May I hope you will favor me with the next?

Nor. Oh yes, two or three, if you like. But let us walk a minute, to rest ourselves. (*Music ceases.*)

Ar. You seem fond of society. (*They walk.*)

Nor. Yes, it is only within the last two or three days that it has become endurable.

Ar. (*aside*). Just the time she has known me! (*Aloud*) Look now at the ball-room. — The old ladies stuck against the walls, like placards offering rewards for matrimony and an establishment. The young ones like a flock of sheep, hustling over one another, round a butcher's door, wondering who 'll be taken off first. Then come your professed dancers, generally roués, un peu passé.

Nor. I saw an old gentleman, just now, tottering across the room, with difficulty. I ran to help him to a chair. Bless you, the poor dear old man wanted me to waltz. Ha, ha! Oh well, commend me to Kilkenny, before St. James's.

Ar. I never was there.

Nor. Indeed!

Ar. Never in my life.

Nor. Then you will never know what living is, till you do go there. The sky is bluer; the grass is greener; it never rains but when you want it; the ditches are wider, and the foxes have longer brushes than in any other county in Ireland! Oh! you must go there. You will never come out of it alive.

Ar. That 's a very strong recommendation.

Nor. You 'll be killed by the height of good living. If you attempt to leave the place before Heaven takes you, there 's not a man, woman, or child there who would not consider himself, herself, or itself personally insulted. Only take care and don't get shot before you 're tired of it.

Ar. Shot! what for?

Nor. Oh, twenty things; — accident, or diversion, or —

Ar. Thank you; I prefer a natural death.

Nor. Sure is n't that a natural death? Where 's the good of dying of a fever? Faith, if you did, may be they'd hold an inquest over you; it is so mighty rare. Say no more, now. To-morrow I 'll write to Pierce Delaney, and bid him expect you. I 'll tell him to give you my horse, White Lightning. Oh, he 's a beauty! — bright bay, and black legs. To get on him is impracticable, and when mounted, to keep him down upon the earth impossible. 'T was Pierce and the boys taught me to ride.

Ar. Boys! Are they young men?

Nor. Oh, pretty fair; — from fifty to seventy. When I was ten

years old he put me on the back of a hunter, bid me hold fast by myself, and keep on tight; so that by the time I was fifteen there was n't a quadruped in the five counties, possessed of a back, that I feared to run at a six-foot stone fence, — ay, and lend him a fifth leg to help him over it, if necessary. Oh! you will enjoy it.

Ar. But I should like some kind of an introduction.

Nor. You are your own introduction. The Delaneys' door has lain open since the days of Brian Boroihme, and would n't shut now, if he wanted it. There 's the cup and the trencher, hand and heart, and cead mile failte for all; and if you choose to live there forever, why what would prevent ye? And when, after you 're dead, is not Kilkenny church the oldest and finest in Ireland? And would n't the Delaney give you your choice of the best of it? Ah, be sure he would, and welcome.

Ar. I 'll buy an estate there directly.

Nor. Do; there 's plenty to sell — more 's the pity. But when you 've got it, take my advice — keep it.

Ar. I 'd place a lady as steward. She would be lenient. (*A pause — walking.*)

Nor. Yes, too lenient.

Ar. How so?

Nor. It 's not much rent you 'd get out of it. Ha, ha!

Ar. Why not?

Nor. Oh, you don't know the Kilkenny boys. After half an hour's comedtherin, as they call it, the poor girl would imagine herself paid, and give a quittance into the bargain.

Ar. Indeed! I must take a lesson in that art.

Nor. It 's all taught in one word.

Ar. And what 's that?

Nor. Blarney.

Ar. Ha, ha! (*Aside*) Now 's my time. My soul 's in arms, and eager for the fray. I 'll try a little ruse first. (*Aloud*) How grieved I am that I shall be obliged to curtail our acquaintanceship.

Nor. Oh! why? why?

Ar. I leave England to-morrow.

Nor. Nonsense!

Ar. Business of importance.

Nor. O, I 'm so sorry! Can't you send?

Ar. No.

Nor. Well, that 's always my luck. — The instant I find any one I care for, they 're sure to be off. There was poor Terence Fitzgerald —

Ar. But had he business of very great importance?

Nor. Yes, very, — he died.

Ar. One thing would induce me to stop.

Nor. What is it?

Ar. If you would ask me to remain.

Nor. Oh, sure I have! I do! Stop — do stop!

Ar. For your sake?

Nor. Eh?

Ar. (*drawing nearer*). Say remain for my sake

Nor. I don't understand you.

Ar. (*aside*). What naiveté! Another girl would have ordered a trousseau and printed cards, for half as much. (*Aloud*) Must I be explicit? Dearest Norah! you are the only inducement I have to remain in London. Had I not a hope —

Nor. (*quietly, and half aside*). Oh! I understand you now.

Ar. I love you, Norah, passionately! — with such an adoration as a nature wild as mine is only capable of conceiving! Speak; — you are your own mistress.

Nor. Ah! Do you know I am penniless and an orphan?

Ar. A double reason to accept my wealth and protection.

Nor. (*with naiveté*). Are you sure you know what you are about?

Ar. Do not hold me in suspense! Give me —

Nor. Sure, I have nothing to give.

Ar. Your heart.

Nor. That 's yours already.

Ar. I 'm in heaven! (*Kisses her.*)

Nor. No; hush! you are in Twickenham (*Music, piano. behind* R. H.)

Enter MRS. COMFORT, *from pavilion*, R. H.

Mrs. C. Oh, dear! dear! how grieved I am! I 'll speak another time. I — (*Going.*)

Nor. Stay!

Mrs. C. (R. H.) I saw nothing, mind, — positively nothing! How cruel was I to interrupt the gentleman in the freshness of his ardor!

Nor. (C.) His ardor will keep, ma'am, longer than your silence.

Mrs. C. You may confide in my discretion.

Nor. But we have nothing to confide.

Mrs. C. Oh! I crave a moment of your dear time. Ahem! it is rather a delicate subject.

Nor. Then pray end it as soon as possible.

Mrs. C. You may have observed that Lady Daventry is of rather a fickle temper?

Nor. So it has often struck me.

Mrs. C. Sir William Daventry is anything but an ill-looking man.

Nor. So it has often struck me.

Mrs. C. And you are very pretty.

Nor. So it has often str — I mean, that 's a matter of taste.

Mrs. C. Lady Daventry has become ridiculously jealous of her old husband.

Ar. (L. H.) Do you mean that she is jealous of old Greenoaks and Norah? that is, I — Miss O'Connor?

Nor. Never mind; tell me at once; — does Lady Daventry consider me an intruder in her house?

Mrs. C. My dear love, a few words apart will explain her reason for jealousy. (*Music ceases.*)

Nor. No, I want no reason. You have said enough.

Mrs. C. But, my dear —

Nor. I will seek Sir William. (*Going up*, R. H.)

Ar. So will I.

Mrs. C. But he does n't know a word of it.

Nor. Faith, then he shall ! [*Exit into pavilion*, R. H

Ar. Yes, he shall ; — (X C.) — faith, then he shall ! (*Music, piano, behind* R. H.)

Enter STANMORE, *from pavilion*, R. H.

Oh, Stanmore, will you ask Fuss to return the letter I gave him this morning. Get it from him, will you? thank you.

[*Exit into pavilion*, R. H

Enter SIR WILLIAM DAVENTRY *and* FUSS, R. H. 2 E.

SITUATIONS.

R. H. *Stanmore.* *Fuss.* *Sir William.* *Mrs. Comfort.* L. H.

Dav. I am determined to do something horrible, to somebody. Things cannot continue in this state. I cannot remain in the room, a witness to her outrageous conduct.

Mrs. C. It certainly is flagrant.

Stan. Fuss, Ardent says you need not deliver that letter he gave you this morning. (*Music ceases.*)

Fuss. Letter, letter ; oh yes ! 'Pon my life, I had quite forgotten it ! Here it is. Let me see, who was it intended for? — some one here ; yes. Oh ! Lady Daventry, wasn't it?

Mrs. C. Lady Daventry !

Fuss. He said take the first opportunity to deliver it. So I do — there it is. (*Gives it to* SIR WILLIAM.)

Dav. Wrote to my wife !

Stan. (*aside*). Ha, ha ! this is Fuss's perfection of a blunder !

Mrs. C. What can it contain?

Fuss. I think he mentioned — a — um — oh yes, it contains his heart — his soul — his all !

Dav. The devil it does ! Then by your leave — (*Opens it, and reads*) "*Madam, you will doubtless be surprised, but I trust not offended, by receiving this deferential address, from one whom you cannot look on but as a stranger.*" Oh !

Fuss. Ah !

Dav. I thought there was something at the bottom of it.

Stan. (*aside*). And a confounded deal more than you suspect.

Dav. (*reading*). "*If unacceptable, pardon it as a mere madness, rather than condemn it as a wanton insult.*" Now, that 's remarkably elegant and respectful !

Mrs. C. Very ! Go on. (*Looks over his shoulder, with anxiety.*)

Dav. "As a wanton insult !" I admire that excessively !

Mrs. C. Pray go on !

Dav. "Wanton insult !" Eh? — what? Oh Lord !

Stan. Now for it.

Dav. (*reading*). "*Loveliest of created beings, I adore you to distraction !*"

Fuss. That 's rather strong.

Dav. (*reading*). "*Now you have stolen my heart, give it me back, or take the rest.*" Where am I?

Mrs. C. I hope Lady Daventry has given him no encouragement.

Dav. She has ! she has ! Oh, my head is getting giddy !

Fuss. Never mind that, if it gets nothing else.

Dav. My dear friend, lend me your advice.

Fuss. Lend! I despise the word, sir! I'll give it you.

Dav. Thank you.

Fuss. Don't mention it; you are quite welcome. I have more than I want, and it never was of the slightest use to me.

Dav. My wife must have encouraged him, or he never would have dared to write that. (*Music, piano, behind* R. H.)

Mrs. C. Here she comes. Perhaps you'd (*glancing at* SIR WILLIAM) like to speak to her? Who is she looking for? Oh, Mr. Ardent, I suppose. How very indiscreet, I must say! Major, am I not engaged to you?

Fuss. I quite forgot. Yes; allow me.

[*Exeunt* MRS. COMFORT *and* FUSS, *into pavilion*, R. H.

Dav. I see Ardent coming. Keep him off, Stanmore; and tell him if he does not desist from his obvious flirtations with my wife, that —

Stan. He must take the consequences.

Dav. Exactly.

Enter ARDENT, *from pavilion*, R. H.

Ar. (C.) My dear Stanmore! I cannot escape that devil of a woman, Lady Daventry! She meets me at every corner, while Norah is invisible.

Enter LADY DAVENTRY, *from pavilion*, R. H.

Here she is again, by Jove!

[*Exeunt* STANMORE *and* ARDENT, *into pavilion*, R. H.

Dav. There she is. (*Music ceases.*) How lovely she looks! I will not show her Ardent's letter. It might put her on her guard.

Lady D. Well, Sir William, have you quite concluded your flirtation with Miss O'Connor?

Dav. Don't be ridiculous.

Lady D. (R. H.) Sir William Daventry.

Dav. Ma'am.

Lady D. Will you answer me one question?

Dav. To the best of my power.

Lady D. Do you consider me a fool, or worse?

Dav. Candidly?

Lady D. Candidly!

Dav. Well then, candidly — I consider you worse.

Lady D. Not so blind but I can see through your iniquities.

Dav. Good gracious! I've been doing something horrible, and I don't know what it is!

Lady D. I pity the victims of your wickedness, and despise you!

Dav. You are very kind.

Lady D. Do you dare to look me in the face?

Dav. Yes; and a very good looking face it is. Rather cloudy just now, though.

Lady D. (*aside*). I will give him a hint. Listen, sir! I've found you out. (*Whispers.*)

Dav. Have you? (*Whispers.*)

Lady D. I don't wish to make your horrid atrocities public.

Dav. Thank you.

Lady D. Hush!

Dav. Eh?

Lady D. She has come to town. (*Whispering.*)

Dav. (*whispering in same manner*). Has she, though? Well, you do astonish me.

Lady D. And I know it. Now, Sir William, what have you to say?

Dav. I hope she 's well.

Lady D. (*aside*). I see, I see; he 'll brazen it out. Nothing but my going to Lord Stanmore, and convicting him to his face, will make him own the truth. He is case-hardened. Oh! that I could retaliate in any way, and make him jealous by any means!

Dav. And now, Lady Daventry, that you have emptied that pack of nonsense out of your temper, permit me to speak, and to inform you, definitively, that I will not sanction your intimacy with Mr. Ardent.

Lady D. (*aside*). It is coming, I do believe. (*Aloud*) Nor I yours with Miss O'Connor.

Dav. Pooh! she is a little girl!

Lady D. And he is a little boy, if you come to that.

Dav. Yes, madam; but little boys are frequently very dangerous members of society.

Lady D. And so are old men, sir.

Dav. In short, I shall forbid him the house.

Lady D. And I 'll do the same by Norah.

Dav. Dare you?

Lady D. Ay, Sir William, anything! You do not know me yet, I see.

Dav. I see I don't. I only wish I had known as much three months ago.

Lady D. (*aside*). If I can only keep cool, now.

Dav. You are the common point and talk of the town already.

Lady D. Talk of the town! Explain yourself!

Dav. Well, if you will have it out, I say that if that young scamp does n't follow up the hint that you have given to him, why he 's a cooler blooded man than I was at his age; and now you have it, Lady Daventry.

Lady D. (*aside*). He 's getting too hot. (*Aloud*) Do you dare to suspect my honor?

Dav. Honor! Ha, ha!

Lady D. I dare you to prove your words!

Dav. Oh! Lady Daventry, the woman who outrages every feeling of love to her husband, and respect to herself; who flirts, who ogles, and lives upon the very brink of shame, lacks but an object to plunge headlong into eternal ruin! (*Waltz, piano, behind* R. H.)

Lady D. (*aside*). Now, does n't that sound like innocence? 'Pon my life, it 's wonderful! I hear a waltz commencing. (*Aloud*) Mr. Ardent has what you want, to appreciate me properly, — he has brains.

Dav. Has he? Then he shan't have 'em long, if there 's a pistol to be had. Damme, but I 'll equalize our pretensions in that respect.

Lady D. (*aside*). I wish I could see Ardent. No matter; I'll pretend. (*Aloud*) Ah, Mr. Ardent! I had forgotten my engagement. What a delicious thing a waltz is! (*Aside*) That 's severe. (*Aloud*) Have I kept you waiting? I 'm very sorry. (*Music ceases.*)

[*Exit into pavilion*, R. H.

Dav. What can she mean by her inuendoes: "I know all" — "she has come to town" — "my depravities"? It 's that horrid woman, again. That Mrs. Comfort has been snivelling at her, for a wretched woman, and she believes it. I 'll go and explain. No, hang me if I do! I 'm the offended party. I 'll watch her closely. (*Waltz, very piano, behind* R. H.) I would scorn to play the spy; but where is she? Hallo! there she is, waltzing in the arms of a ten-foot guardsman. What a disgraceful position for a married woman! I say, you sir, I 'm in a fever! I wonder if he has a wife. I 'll find out; and if he has, I 'll — I 'll — I 'll waltz with her, and be revenged!

Enter STANMORE, *from pavilion*, R. H.

You have told Ardent that I consider his flirtations with my wife insulting?

Stan. (R. H.) I did. He laughed, and sung something about kissing and prattling with fifty fair maids.

Dav. Let him keep to his maids, then, and leave my wife alone. However, we shall see if the young gentleman can fight, as well as sing. Request him to name his time, place, and weapons.

Stan. I think it right to inform you that he has some deep scheme afoot with respect to your ward.

Dav. What the devil! — both at once!

Stan. I fear that Lady Daventry has become jealous of his attentions to Norah.

Enter ARDENT, *hastily and out of breath, from pavilion*, R. H.

Ar. I 've had three hair-breadth escapes from that imminently deadly woman. Beg pardon; — never mind. Here 's a letter from Norah — I mean Miss O'Connor. (*Gives letter to* DAVENTRY, *and goes up.*)

Dav. (*opening letter, and reading*). "*My dear Sir William, Lady Daventry has intimated to me that she considers my presence under her roof as an intrusion. I have therefore withdrawn, Mrs. Comfort having kindly offered me the use of hers. Do not blame Kate. Your affectionate Norah.*" What can this mean?

Stan. Ask Mr. Ardent to explain it.

Dav. What shall I do? Norah must return.

Stan. On no account. Let me remain here in her place, and my house in town is at her service. Mrs. Comfort can live there with her, for propriety's sake, until this quarrel is made up.

Dav. Stay; I 'll put Kate to the test. I will tell her that it is my intention to accompany my ward back to Ireland. I will give her full scope with that young scamp, while I, quietly domiciled in your house, may watch the effects.

Stan. Excellent!

Ar. Here she comes again! (*Runs down*, R. H.) This is too

bad ! Stan, protect me ! Sir William, I promised Miss O'Connor to get an answer. [*Exeunt* ARDENT *and* STANMORE, *into pavilion*, R. H.

Enter LADY DAVENTRY, R. H. 2 E.

Dav. Read that letter.

Lady D. (*looking over letter*). Well?

Dav. I leave this house to-night, to conduct that ill-used girl to the home in Ireland where she was beloved as she ought to be.

Lady D. Yes ; and you will lead her from the home in England where she was beloved as she ought *not* to be.

Dav. Will you recall my ward?

Lady D. No !

Dav. Nor ask her pardon?

Lady D. Never !

Dav. Then mark me : here we separate forever !

Lady D. Very well ; — very well, sir. (*Aside*) Ah ! what have I done?

Dav. (L. H.) The deeds shall be prepared.

Lady D. Be it so. Ha, ha !

Dav. If I leave you now, it is never to return !

Lady D. (R. H.) Go !

Dav. You have said it. [*Exit*, L. H. U. E.

(LADY DAVENTRY *attempts to speak, but falls fainting on a seat, with face to* L. H.)

Reënter ARDENT, R. H. 2 E.

Ar. (*going to her*). Did you call me? (*She turns round, hastily and haughtily.* — ARDENT *runs off* R. H. 2 E., *alarmed.*)

QUICK DROP. — END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

THE APPOINTMENT.

A Dining-room in STANMORE'S *House.* — *Tormentor-door, practical,* R. H. 1 E., *with key in it.* — *Tormentor-door, practical,* L. H. 1 E., *to open on stage.* — *Door, practical,* R. H. 2 E., *with key in it.* — *Door, practical,* L. H. 2 E. — *An interior room, with massive console-table, chandeliers, and sofa, is seen through large folding doors,* C. — STANMORE *and* DAVENTRY *discovered at table, in front, over their wine, taking it very easy, with their legs reposing on chairs, from which the ladies are supposed to have just withdrawn.*

Dav. (*partially intoxicated*). Pass the wine.

Stan. We shall have to adjourn presently to Mrs. Comfort and Miss O'Connor. Allow me to prescribe moderation.

Dav. Suppose we brew. Let 's have punch. After Madeira like this I 'm wonderful. But you never saw me after punch. The effects are supernatural. Ring for the causes.

Stan No, no.

Dav. Do see me after punch! — do!

Stan. 'T is getting late; time flies!

Dav. Does he? I wish time would take my wife with him. I say, Stanny, do you think she suspects that I am here in London, and in your house?

Stan. Has not the remotest idea of it. She imagines you are in Dublin by this time.

Dav. And Norah?

Stan. Is with you.

Dav. Can we rely on Mrs. Comfort's silence?

Stan. Implicitly.

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H. 1 E.

Le. Madame Comfort and Miss O'Connor say coffee is waiting, my lors.

Stan. (*aside*). Thank heaven! Come, Daventry.

Dav. Shall I?

Stan. If you can.

Dav. That Madeira is superb! One more glass, I 'll go. (*Attempts to rise, but fails.*) It 's difficult.

Stan. It is, very. Take my arm. (*Coming forward with* DAVENTRY.)

Dav. (R. H.) I hate a man who gets drunk.

Stan. (L. H.) So do I.

Dav. Why does n't he stop, when he can't go on?

Stan. Exactly.

Dav. You have taken too much, Stanny.

Stan. No.

Dav. You have, you dog! — you have! Let me advise you against it, my dear boy, Stanny. I love you — but don't stagger — hold fast by me — there. Here 's a fellow that positively wanted punch — punch —

Stan. (*aside*). I fear he is too far gone for the ladies.

Dav. Go to bed, and I 'll apologize for you to the coffee; or, if you will go into the room, don't speak to the women. Sit down; I 'll carry it off for you.

Stan. (*aside*). He 's in a very high state of preservation.

Dav. Did you ever hear me speak! Mr. Chairman! — Mr. Chairman! (*trying to get up*), I rise with great hesitation and difficulty, and a degree of backwardness — (*Staggering.*)

Stan. This way.

Dav. (*suddenly becoming pathetic*). I 'm a villain!

Stan. You are. Come.

Dav. We are all a set of villains!

Stan. We are! we are! — yes.

Dav. Stanny, I don't know how it is, but somehow after dinner, which I look upon as the most philosophical era in the day, when the internal man is well packed, and incapable of containing any more, the ideas get on the top, and, taking a bird's-eye view of humanity, they begin to perceive the utter futility of all mundane things. Do you know, I can distinctly perceive the rotation of the globe on its own axis — distinctly.

Stan. How odd! Hold fast, there, or it may carry you away.

Dav. Who cares if it did, so it didn't carry me to my wife. How pitifully pathetic I feel! — how sadly affectionate! Poor Kate! — dear Norah! — adored Stanny! I'm but a man, after all. I could cry now at anything. Give me something to cry at. I could shed tears on the spot.

Stan. Could you?

Dav. Show me anything — I don't care what it is — and I'll cry at it.

Stan. Here, Lenoir, the sofa. (*Points* C. — LENOIR *runs up to* C. D.) Lie down there, for half an hour.

Dav. I will.

Stan. And dream of your wife.

Dav. Ah! isn't she a devilish nice woman? What a lovely creature she is, eh! (*Goes up with* STANMORE *to* C. D.)

Stan. Beautiful! (*Puts* SIR WILLIAM *on sofa*, C., *and closes* C. *doors.*)

Dav. Stanny, my boy — (*dropping off*) — Stanny.

Stan. (*opening* C. *doors*). Eh?

Dav. Pass the wine — and let 's have punch — (*softer*) — punch — (*softer*) — punch!

Stan. He 's off! (*Closes* C. *doors.*)

Dav. (*louder*). Stanny!

Stan. (*opening* C. *doors*). Ah!

Dav. Punch — punch.

Stan. That was only the last flash. He is out.

Le. Oui, milor, punch is go out. (*Closes* C. *doors.*)

Stan. (L. H., *advancing*). Good! And now, Lenoir, did you meet that — you know who — Kate?

Le. (R. H.) Oui, milor.

Stan. You have prevented her from coming here for the present, I hope. She has no suspicion?

Le. No more than Sir William, there, vid de punch.

Stan. I don't think she can well discover me, under my change of name, which, luckily, she has been kept in ignorance of. You should, however, to save chance, have put her on the wrong tack.

Le. Oui, milor, I did. I told her you was abroad in China, fighting for tea. She leave de house weeping; — beautifully! — with two little childs! What sentiment! — what moralité!

Stan. Where has she gone?

Le. Into apartment vich I procure for her.

Stan. She did not recognize you?

Le. I think she remember my face.

Stan. It would be difficult to forget such a rascally —

Le. Milor is always right. Monsieur Supple has been waiting for long time, down in your study. He wish to see you.

Stan. Supple, at this hour! What can he want? Show him up.

Le. Oui, milor. (X *to* L. H.)

Stan. Stay.

Le. Oui, milor.

Stan. Lenoir, you know I have always promised that when I married I would provide for you.

Le. Lord Stanmore's promises are never forgot — by me.

Stan. I am about to wed.

Le. Vraiment!

Stan. I intend to give you five hundred pounds.

Le. A sentiment worthy of monsieur alone.

Stan. But you must leave this country. Look you, this present wife of mine may interfere with my interests. Now, as you have persuaded her of my absence from Europe, on pretence of following me, you must convey her to India. A vessel sails from Portsmouth in four days. I will remit regularly to her there, and she can marry if she pleases. She will have numerous offers, and rich ones, I have no doubt. But remember, Lenoir, break the news of our false marriage to her by degrees, and treat her with all respect. Play none of your tricks upon me. I 'll have eyes upon you. You know me.

Le. But, milor, five hundred is so leetle to take care of madame. Oh! and dere are two little childs.

Stan. (*aside*). Humph! I had forgotten the children!

Le. I have a wife in La belle France, which I must leave behind, which I have not seen, since two months after marriage, for twelve years — pauvre Angélique! Five hundred pounds is too little. Say one hundred pounds for throw in each of de leettle childs.

Stan. Well, well!

Le. Seven hundred pounds, for tous les trois! Eh, bien! j'accepte! ma pauvre Angélique! you will break your little heart. Your Francois has had more love to serve monsieur dan to return to you.

[*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E.

Stan. Now, if Supple will undertake to see this affair through, I shall rid myself of Lenoir.

Reënter LENOIR, *showing in* SUPPLE, D. L. H. 1 E., *and exit* D. L. H. 1 E.

Stan. My dear sir! I am delighted to see you. How 's your amiable family?

Sup. I am not married, my lord.

Stan. Oh! I forgot. However, that might not follow. I — no matter. To what may I ascribe the pleasure of your visit?

Sup. Hush! Excuse me. (*He steps lightly to door*, L. H. 1 E., *which he throws open suddenly, and* LENOIR *tumbles in on his face.*)

Le. Sacre bleu! Be dam! what bétise!

Stan. What were you doing, sir?

Le. I was preventing rascal from listening at the door, of course.

Stan. By stopping up the key-hole with your own ear.

Le. Can milor suspect my morale? Bah! what horrible! — ventre bleu!

Stan. Leave the room; and remember, if I suspect again that any one is near that door, I warn you I will practise with my pistols at the key-hole.

Le. Bah! what bétise to open the door like dat! What a dam nonsense.

[*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E.

Stan. Now proceed. Can I do anything to serve you?

Sup. Materially. Can you oblige our firm with five thousand pounds?

Stan. You take my breath away!

Sup. We can mortgage.

Stan. I dare say you can.

Sup. In short, you see, it must be had.

Stan. Must!

Sup. Yes; I 'm very particular in a careful selection of words; as in affairs of importance I conceive them to be of as much consequence as a careful choice of actions.

Stan. You mean that I am in your power?

Sup. A harsh expression.

Stan. Well, to be brief, there is some private business which I want executed; and if you will consent to do it, and give up to me the documents relative to my —

Sup. Exactly —

Stan. I will give you fifteen thousand pounds.

Sup. My dear lord, now you take away my breath! Proceed. Oh! that every client had such a profundity of sound sense. You are a loss to the bar.

Stan. I must tax your patience with a history.

Sup. All in the way of business. What are the facts?

Stan. Look you; five years ago, while on a grouse shooting excursion in the Highlands, with some friends, a sudden storm drove me to seek shelter in a cottage, in the mistress of which I beheld the loveliest creature the warmest fancy could picture. I continually visited the spot. I fell in love with her, and she returned my passion. I would have gladly made her my wife, but she was not eligible; so —

Sup. You deceived her.

Stan. No; she was immaculate; till by a counterfeit marriage —

Sup. I know the rest.

Stan. Now, this person may annoy me. But I think I have hit on a plan of inducing her to leave the country. She imagines that I am abroad. Lenoir has consented to accompany and protect her; but I want some one to see the affair through. Now you are in possession of all the facts, you will know how to act.

Sup. Allow me time to consider.

Stan. Fifteen thousand pounds —

Sup. It is great —

Stan. Put out on bills at thirty per cent —

Sup. Too great —

Stan. Is four thousand five hundred a year.

Sup. Give me her name.

Stan. There 's her address. (*Gives card.*)

Sup. (*reading*). "*Catherine Grahame!*" (*Falls back into a chair.*)

Stan. What 's the matter? Are you ill?

Sup. A fit only. I have them often. No matter; 't is past.

Stan. How pale you look!

Sup. So do you.

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H. 1 E.

Le. Mr. Ardent.

Sup. Where is she? (*Looks at card.*) I see, I see. I wish you a good evening. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E

Le. Milor, I think we must get another sofa for Mr. Ardent.

Stan. What's the matter with him?

Enter ARDENT, *half tipsy, and equipped for travelling*, D. L. H. 1 E.

Ar. I know what you are going to say. I have heard all at the clubs. They talk of nothing else but Norah's elopement with Sir William. I've just a minute to say farewell.

Stan. Where the deuce are you off to?

Ar. To Ireland, in pursuit of Norah. Good bye!

Stan. Stay, I intreat you, you hot-headed fellow!

Ar. I can't. The mail-train starts in eleven minutes. (*Pulls out watch.*)

Stan. Hear me for five.

Ar. Give you two and a half. Fire away.

Stan. Have you made love to Norah?

Ar. I have. One gone.

Stan. And she has accepted you?

Ar. Of course. Two.

Stan. I pity you!

Ar. And a half. Pity me because I shall have the loveliest woman in London for my wife! I'm off. Keep your pity to curl your hair with. Good bye!

Stan. Stay; she is in this house.

Ar. Who? Norah? Impossible! What do you mean?

Stan. Listen with patience, for one moment. Sir William has confided the whole affair to me.

Ar. Can I believe my senses?

Stan. Norah is now within that room. (*Points* L. H. 2 E.) Neither he nor she have left the country.

Ar. I'm paralyzed! Look you, Stan, you know who you are dealing with. If this be not true —

Stan. If you doubt me I will send her to you; and then you can form your own conclusions. (*Aside*) Now he will do something rash; her Irish blood will fire up and consume their acquaintance, and then I shall have a chance. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Ar. (*sitting down*). Where am I? I'm stunned. (*Sees* LENOIR.) Oh! are you there? Come here, you rascally French box of lies. (*Seizes him.*) Now look; if you dare to contradict me, or tell me a falsehood, I'll throw you out of the window! Do you hear?

Le. Oui, monsieur.

Ar. Is there a lady in the house?

Le. Oui, monsieur.

Ar. False!

Le. Oui, monsieur.

Ar. Is Miss O'Connor here?

Le. Oui, monsieur; here she comes.

Ar. The devil! Bring me a bottle of soda-water.

Le. Oui, monsieur. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E.

Ar. Can it be possible — that she — my Norah — can be so wretchedly deceitful as to accept the last flicker of the light of that rascal's love, when here *I* am blazing a perfect illumination?

Enter NORAH, D. L. H. 2 E.

Oh, what a deceitful thing human nature is! — the lovely Norah!

Nor. Meaning me.

Ar. My dearest Norah! (*starting up*) then you have not deserted me?

Nor. Deserted! What do you mean?

Ar. Why was I kept in the dark?

Nor. I don't know, I'm sure. Maybe you forgot to ring for candles.

Ar. Let us leave this place.

Nor. What for?

Ar. Let us fly.

Nor. Are you mad?

Ar. Will you not leave this miserable old wretch who has brought you to this house?

Nor. Miserable old wretch! Good gracious!

Ar. All that I have, consider as your own. I love — adore you! (*Attempts to embrace her.*)

Nor. Thank you. Oblige me by loving me in that chair, and adore me a little further off. (*Getting a table between them.*) I say, have you dined?

Ar. I have.

Nor. I thought so.

Ar. Adorable creature! (*chases her round table, and sits on chair,* R. H.) my sole sorrow is that I cannot offer you my hand with honor to myself or my family. Your connection with Sir William Daventry has precluded that.

Nor. Mr. Ardent! are you sober, sir?

Ar. As you are lovely.

Nor. Then take this answer: You are not so little yourself — so intoxicated — but you could remember to respect me. There is no man to whom I can look, to chastise you. Go, you paltry coward! Oh, I only wish I was my big brother, that 's all! I 'd — I 'd — oh! I 'd — But no; you 'd disgrace the mouth of an honest pistol.

Ar. This is but natural. You are nettled, — disappointed.

Nor. I am, sir. Why would n't I, sure? (*Sits,* R. H. *of* ARDENT.) I took you for an honest, open-hearted, generous, handsome fellow; and I see you are a mean, pitiful, ugly villain! Go! I wish that I could hate you, I do.

Ar. (C.) You don't. (SIR WILLIAM *appears listening,* C. D.)

Nor. (*more softly*). I do. Don't touch me. (*Falls on his shoulder.*) I detest you! Ah, Percy! you are a brute, faith you are!

Ar. I am; I know I am! Come, Norah, don't weep.

Nor. (*looking up in his face*). Say you were jesting.

Ar. No, but —

Nor. Leave me! do you hear? I 'll call.

Ar. Nonsense!

Nor. I will! (SIR WILLIAM *takes a decanter from table,* C.) Let me go! You hurt me! Sir William Daventry! here!

Ar. (R. H.) It 's of no use calling. [*Exit* NORAH, D. L. H. 2 E.

Dav. (L. H.) Isn't it? you young reprobate!

Enter STANMORE, D. L. H. 2 E., *who holds his arm, and prevents his throwing decanter.*

Let me get at him! Damme, let me get at him! (STANMORE *turns him round to* L. H.) Sir, consider your brains knocked out! Consider yourself kicked!

Stan. What is the matter?

Dav. Matter! You may well ask!

Stan. What has happened?

Dav. Happened! Why, if I had n't just woke up in time to knock that rascal down, I can't exactly calculate what would *not* have happened. Pistols, Stanmore, and we 'll have it out comfortably.

Stan. Here, Ardent, go into that room. (*Points* D. R. H. 2 E. *Aside to him*) Devilish unfortunate! You went to far.

Ar. I 'm bewildered! (STANMORE *pushes him into door* R. H. 2 E., *and locks it.*)

Dav. Keep him fast, till I tell Norah not to be alarmed. [*Exit*, C. D.

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H. 1 E.

Le. Miladi Daventry is arrived down below.

Stan. Lady Daventry! The devil! By Jove, it is that infernal letter! She expects to detect her husband in an intrigue. What an ass I was, not to have foreseen this! What is to be done?

Le. Major Fuss is with Madame Comfort. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E.

Stan. Fuss! He will remember the mistake of the letter, and I shall be discovered!

Enter FUSS, D. L. H. 1 E.

Fuss. Eh! oh! my dear Stanmore! I 'm delighted to find you! am rather conglomerated about this affair! I know it is a splendi story, if I could only catch it; but it slips about in my memory in a most tantalizing manner! What a fortunate thing it is that men are born without reputations! Saves a great deal of trouble. But who is the sinner?

Stan. If you will just step into my dressing-room, here, (*points* R. H. 1 E.) you will overhear all.

Fuss. Thank you. (X *to* R. H.) Bless me! a private box. (*Opens door*, R. H. 1 E.)

Stan. Make haste!

Fuss. If any one fights, don't let them fire in this direction. [*Exit*, D. R. H. 1 E.

Stan. Hush! (*Shuts him in*, D. R. H. 1 E.)

Fuss. (*putting his head out*). You could n't oblige me with pen and paper, to make a few "observations from an eye-witness"?

Stan. (*shutting door* R. H. 1 E., *and locking it*). If I could but keep Ardent out of the way, I might effect a reconciliation between Sir William and his wife. How unfortunate, how unfortunate that they should both call here at the same moment! But I fear that hot-headed fool will not leave the place quietly. I 'll tell him Lady Daventry is here, and that Norah is ready to forgive him, if he will quit the house. She must return to Mrs. Comfort's; for if her ladyship discovers her, London would not hold them. [*Exit*, D. R. H. 2 E.

Enter SIR WILLIAM, C. D., *and* LENOIR, D. L. H. 1 E.

Dav Now, sir, I am ready to — Eh! where's that young rascal?

Le. Which, milor?

Dav. Mr. Ardent.

Le. He is trying to escape with Miladi Daventry, in dat room.

Dav. Lady Daventry!

Le. Oui; miladi chose him, you know, her cavalier servante. — Miladi jealous — find him out — follow him here; because she tink he go to Ireland, after Ma'mselle Norah. C'est natural!

Dav. So, she forbade her my house, from jealousy of Ardent's attentions.

Le. Miladi is coming up.

Dav. Oh! if I could but conceal myself, and burst in upon them! If I — She imagines that I am out of the country. That closet. (*Trying door* R. H. 2 E.) 'T is locked. What 's to be done? I have it. Close those doors. (LENOIR *closes* C. *doors, then exit* D. L. H. 1 E.) Must I witness this? (*Blows out candles, on table in* C. — *Lights down.*) Here 's a situation for three months after marriage! What matrimonial almanac could have foretold such a storm in my connubial climate, after the change of the honeymoon?

Enter STANMORE, *leading* ARDENT, D. R. H. 2 E.

Ar. (R. H., *whispering*). My dear Stanmore! I owe you a thousand obligations! But where the deuce are the lights?

Stan. (L. H.) Never mind. My sole desire is to reconcile Daventry; that 's my object. They are both in the house; so remain quiet here, while I see if the road is clear. [*Exit*, C. D. L. H.

Dav. (*up* C., *at table.*) I hear a buzzing.

Enter LADY DAVENTRY, D. L. H. 1 E.

Lady D. Oh, gracious! the room 's quite dark. I can't find him anywhere. Have I been misled!

Ar. I hear the whisk of a petticoat. Hist! is that Norah?

Lady D. There he is. Oh, the wretch! 't is Norah he expects.

Ar. You have forgiven me.

Lady D. (*seizing him. Aloud*) And so, sir, so! this is the way you treat me! — this is the return I have earned!

Ar. (R. H., *struggling*). Lady Daventry, by Jove!

Lady D. (L. H.) No, you shall not escape me yet. Promise me you won't go to Ireland. Oh! how can you treat me so? I that have loved you through all! You pretended to think my love was not entirely yours. Base man! Oh, you 'll break my heart!

Dav. (*up* C., *at table; aside, and feeling about*). I'd break his head, if I knew where abouts it was.

Ar. (*aside*). It 's devilish lucky Sir William does n't hear all this.

Lady D. Why do you not answer me? You dare not speak.

Ar. (*aside*). 'Pon my soul, she 's right!

Lady D. Have you nothing to extenuate your faithless conduct?

Ar. (R. H., *aside*). Sir William has been a rascally old sinner, it seems. I must redeem his character. (*Embraces her.*) If he only

knew all I was suffering for the sake of his reputation! (*Turns round to* L. H., *embracing, and does not leave* LADY DAVENTRY *till* C. *doors are opened.*)

Lady D. Don't embrace me! Don't!

Dav. Damme, I can't stand that! Hallo!—Stanmore!—lights!—fire! (STANMORE *opens* C. *doors, from the inside.—The room is lighted by chandeliers at back.—Lights up.*)

Lady D. (R. C.) Mr. Ardent!

Dav. (*down* L. H.) Lady Daventry.

Lady D. I'm bewildered! What can this mean?

Stan. (*down* R. H.) What the devil have you been about now?

Ar. (C.) Hang me if I know.

Dav. Perhaps you have something to extenuate this conduct, madam?

Lady D. I have been deceived! I did not expect to find Mr. Ardent here. (X *to* R. H.)

Dav. Who then?

Lady D. (R. H.) You and Norah.

Dav. Pooh! you are well aware that Miss O'Connor is in Dublin by this time; but—

All. Oh!

Enter NORAH, D. L. H. 2 E., *coming down,* L. *corner.*

Lady D. (R. H.) Is she, indeed? Then this is an unexpected return, I suppose.

Nor. What's the matter? (FUSS *begins to hammer at door,* R. H. 1 E.)

Fuss. (*without,* R. H. 1 E.) Let me out!—let me out! (STANMORE *unlocks door,* R. H. 1 E.)

Lady D. What's that?—who's there?

Enter FUSS, D. R. H. 1 E.

Fuss. (R. H.) The North East Bungays! Stay, Sir William! Stop, Lady Daventry! You are all wrong, and you are all right! I remember now, I made a mistake in the delivery of a letter. I'll set it all straight again. I can clear up everything. Let me see—somebody gave me a letter—a love letter!

SITUATIONS.

R. H. *Fuss. Stan. Lady D. Sir William. Ardent. Norah.* L. H.

Ar. (*aside*). I dare not speak!

Fuss. Some one gave me a letter for—for—Miss Norah O'Connor. Now I have it!

Lady D. Who gave it?

Fuss. Let me see—a—um—it was Sir William Daventry!

Dav. I!

Nor. He! (X *from* L. *to* SIR WILLIAM, C.)

Fuss. Yes, and I hope that will clear up the misunderstanding.

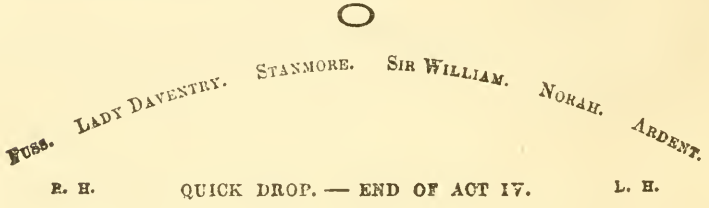
Ar. Oh, Norah!

Lady D. Now, Sir William, what have you to say?

Dav. It is false!

Fuss. False !
Stan. This is too much. Come.
Lady D. For Heaven's sake ! — Stanmore ! — they will fight !
Fuss. False ! You shall hear from me !
Dav. You are all in an infernal plot together !
Nor. Cousin ! this way.
Dav. A set of scoundrelly — rascally —
Lady D. He 's mad !
Ar. You shall apologize !
Dav. I 'll fight every one of you !
} *All spoken together, quickly.*

(NORAH *up with* SIR WILLIAM. — STANMORE *forces* ARDENT *up.* — LADY DAVENTRY *interposes with* FUSS. — SIR WILLIAM *seizes decanter from table,* C., *and presents threateningly,* "*comme fusil,*" *at* FUSS. — ARDENT *kisses* NORAH. — *Animated Tableau.*)



ACT V.

SEPARATION AND REPARATION.

A Drawing-room in SIR WILLIAM DAVENTRY'S *House. — At the back is seen a large archway, or window, opening into a conservatory. — Set door* R. H. 2 E. *— Set door* L. H. 2 E. *— Table and chairs on* R. C., *with writing materials, taper, &c.*

Enter SIR WILLIAM DAVENTRY *and* NORAH, D. R. H. 2 E.

Dav. Spare yourself and me the pain of a refusal.
Nor. Ah, now do show yourself what you are : a dear, good, noble-hearted —
Dav. Old ass !
Nor. I merely ask of you to seek an explanation.
Dav. To what end?
Nor. There must be a mistake somewhere.
Dav. There is ; and I made it by marrying her. I was old enough to know better.
Nor. What has age to do with love? 'Faith, I 'd marry Methuselah himself, if I liked him.
Dav. Can I blame her? No ! My age pleads for her. Does it not say, " How could you expect a young and lovely thing, just bud-

ding into the May of life, to waste the odor of its youth upon a withered, sapless bough, already in the sear and yellow leaf? How could you hope it, you ugly, grizzled oaf? How could you think of it for a moment, you damned old fool! Three months ago, Sir William Daventry, of Greenoaks, bachelor, on the one part, signed a contract of marriage with Kate Sophia Savage, spinster, on the other part; and now, after ninety days of not uninterrupted happiness, the aforesaid parties are about to reassemble, to conclude a second deed, which shall sever them for life.

Nor. And I, Norah O'Connor, spinster, had all but concluded a deed with Percy Ardent, bachelor, and got no value received, but half a dozen hours of continually interrupted bliss.

Dav. The — the scoundrel! the rascal! My heart breaks out at his name.

Nor. The wretch! So does mine.

Dav. Oh! if I only had him here!

Nor. Oh! if you only had!

Dav. (*musing*). They say he is a dead shot, but guilt will unnerve his hand.

Nor. You don't intend to fight? Oh, my dear cousin! no, no! It was no fault of his; it was yours — no, it was mine — or anybody's. Oh, he 's mighty wicked; and may be if he were shot now and then, it might teach him to know better.

Dav. What would you say, if, after all, I blew his brains out?

Nor. Oh, for my sake, don't try, don't!

Dav. Why not?

Nor. If you aim at his head (*hiding her face on his shoulder*) sure you will hit my heart.

Dav. Hallo! Why you have been swearing all this morning that you hated him.

Nor. So I do; but I did n't swear. You did enough for both. But then I 'm naturally soft-hearted, and he 's naturally young; and — and — I see there 's a deal of room for improvement in the soil of his heart; and I 've a wonderful turn for all kinds of agricultural speculations.

Dav. I 'm petrified! Did n't he insult you?

Nor. He did, the villain!

Dav. Did n't I find you — in — ay, in his very arms?

Nor. You did. (*Aside*) Ay, and I almost wish you had left me there.

Dav. Did n't I see him give you a kiss?

Nor. No; but you would if you had waited.

Dav. And for all this —

Nor. I 'd give him absolution.

Dav. You forget and forgive like an angel.

Nor. No; I remember and forgive like a woman. Ah, cousin, we easily pardon any insult that flatters our vanity. Had it been any other woman that he had tried to kiss, sure you might have shot him and welcome.

Dav. Did he not make dishonorable proposals to you?

Nor. He did; but they disgraced him; — they did not affect me. I 'll give him time to think twice. I think he was misled — deceived.

I know he was very much in love. I'll pass that over; and I have reason to imagine he was rather happy.

Dav. (L. H.) Happy?

Nor. (R. H.) Elevated.

Dav. Eh, eh! — oh! ah! — I see; when a gentleman makes a beast of himself he's happy. Yes; but when his servants indulge they become drunken vagabonds, I perceive. A delicate distinction, that.

Nor. Remember it well. You may want it.

Dav. What? Eh, Norah, do you mean to insinuate that I — eh, ever?

Nor. Oh no, never; only it's handy; and you might lend it to a friend. Do so now to Percy.

Dav. Do you set the example?

Nor. Why, after all, when a gentleman sends his brains down stairs in an empty bottle, where are you to look for reason or responsibility in anything he says or does?

Dav. Well, well, if I can avoid him consistently with honor I will do so.

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Eus. Lord Stanmore has arrived, sir. Mr. Supple waits in the parlor. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Dav. He brings the deeds of separation. Is it so near, then? I never thought it would come to this. I won't yield. It will be a hard struggle. (*Appears moved.* — X *to* R. H.)

Nor. (L. H.) My dear cousin!

Dav. (R. H.) Ah, Norah! I dare say you think me an absurd old fool. My child, the love of youth has many blossoms; — wild with its very sweets, it blooms, and casts a thousand odors to the winds, it is so free. But when the seed of first affection falls on a heart way-worn by the heavy foot of Time, it strikes a root fast as the mountain pine. No storm can tear away its sinewy clutch. The soil may groan, as now it does; but still it holds, till death shall loose the gripe. Be it so! I will sign. Ay, I grieve for her; for she was a glorious creature! — too good for me! — too good for me! [*Exit*, D. R. H. 2 E.

Nor. My poor cousin! my heart weeps for him. Hush! I hear Stanmore. I suspect he has more to do with this quarrel between my cousin and Kate than he will own. I know he belied me to Percy. I will avoid him; but how? That way — no, it leads to Sir William's rooms. The conservatory. I'll just step in here for a moment.

[*Exit*, C.

Enter STANMORE *and* LENOIR, D. L. H. 2 E.

Stan. Who is in the house at present?

Le. Sir William Daventry and Mam'selle O'Connor.

Stan. So, then; show Mr. Supple here, and wait in the ante-room till I call. Allez! [*Exit* LENOIR, D. L. H. 2 E.
The crisis is approaching. Here comes Supple. I must not appear too anxious about the success of his mission.

Reënter LENOIR, *showing in* SUPPLE, D. L. H. 2 E, *who looks pale, but determined.* — STANMORE *appears confused.* — *Exit* LENOIR, D. L. H. 2 E.

Those papers? Ah! the deed of separation of my unhappy relatives. Sir William Daventry makes a settlement, doubtless? Sad business, my dear sir. Separations always are.

Sup. There may be worse, my lord.

Stan. Yes, marriages. Oh yes, it is a wicked world, as your practice must have proved.

Sup. (*sneeringly*). Oh, sir, you do me too much honor! I should have thought your own practice, now, could tell more tales of it.

Stan. How, sir?

Sup. Have you forgotten Catherine Grahame?

Stan. (*aside*). Would to Heaven I had! (*Aloud, and carelessly*) Poor Kate! the girl loved me. But hang it, Supple, am I to be made an example of for a chance that happens daily?

Sup. Its frequency does not palliate its atrocity.

Stan. Atrocity! What have I done, more than other men of fashion?

Sup. Oh, sir, fashion, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins.

Stan. Perhaps so. But to the point; did Kate yield to you?

Sup. At a word.

Stan. How?

Sup. I related to her a very simple tale.

Stan. (R. H.) That is so like her! She was always fond of novels at breakfast.

Sup. Listen, sir! These were my words: when a young man, about your own age, I was sent to a distant part of France.

Stan. Indeed!

Sup. I met a young, lovely, innocent French peasant girl; I loved her; she was proof against my prayers; I married her by the rites of her belief alone, taking advantage of a mere incompletion of a formula. I deceived, disowned, deserted her; she died broken-hearted, leaving me her blessing and a daughter. That child I do believe to be the only thing in this wide world that loves me for myself alone! (STANMORE *smiles*). You smile. — You think me weak. Perhaps I am. — I do adore my poor wronged child!

Stan. How did this affect her?

Sup. Thus: for years I worked — I toiled — I sinned; for what? myself? No; but for my idol. Unknown, unnoticed, I watched the seedling of my guilt — rooted in my heart — spring up into a tendril; so clinging round my very life that it shut out the thought of age. Now listen; I, her father, found one day a painted viper nestled in my daughter's breast, which her young blood had warmed to life. Where I looked for innocence I found his fangs; for love, his poison. I saw my poor Kate's heart torn, crushed by this reptile; while I, her own father —

Stan. How —

Sup. I was sent to trample on the remnant he had left!

Stan. Kate! Can it be?

Sup. Yes; your victim!

Stan. Kate Grahame! (*Starts up.*)

Sup. Is my child! (*Sinks into a chair.*)

Stan. The devil! My dear fellow, surely you will acquit me of any intent to wrong you. Had I but known — upon my soul, I pity you!

Sup. Pity, my lord! Will your pity find her lost honor?

Stan. Well, I 'm sorry — devilish sorry.

Sup. Will your sorrow mend my poor child's broken heart?

Stan. What can I do?

Sup. Marry her!

Stan. Why — you see — I cannot exactly.

Sup. Look you, *Mr. Daventry*, wed my daughter, and I will deliver up to you all the correspondence revealing the secret of your birth.

Stan. Where is Kate now?

Sup. In my house.

Stan. Hem! I accept your offer.

Sup. Here is the contract, ready drawn and well secured; and here the correspondence.

Stan. Where shall I write?

Sup. Will you not read it first?

Stan. Oh, I rely implicitly on the well-known integrity of my dear father-in-law. (*Signs at table*, R. C.)

Sup. Good! and now, sir, these are the papers.

Stan. Oblige me by riging that bell. (SUPPLE *pulls bell-rope*, L. H. 1 E. — STANMORE *lights a taper at table.*) My dear sir, I should wish this marriage to be as private as possible.

Sup. Most considerate.

Stan. So, if you please, Lenoir can conduct Kate to my house, where she will be treated as Lady Stanmore.

Sup. I did not give you credit for so much love for her, although she did.

Enter LENOIR, D. L. H. 2 E.

Stan. Write a line, desiring her to trust herself to Lenoir's guidance.

Sup. With pleasure. (*Goes up to table and writes.*)

Stan. (*aside to* LENOIR). Now lose no time. Here is a check. — My carriage is at the door. You understand me.

Sup. (*giving letter*). That will serve.

Stan. (*reading*). "*Gray's Inn.*" Away with you, Lenoir.

[*Exit* LENOIR, D. L. H. 2 E.

Stan. (L. C.) And now to business.

Sup. (R. H.) Nay, 't is done. (*About to take the settlements.*)

Stan. Not quite. (*Puts his hand on them.*) I believe, Mr. Supple, you are aware that I seldom trifle.

Sup. What do you mean, sir?

Stan. I would not do a rascally act; but when it is the only thing I can do it must be the best.

Sup. Lord — I mean *Mr. Daventry* — you alarm me. You cannot mean that you refuse to wed my daughter?

Stan. 'T is not in my power.

Sup. You will not withhold the letters, then?

Stan. No, not from the flames?

Sup. And Kate! — my child! What have I done? I will pursue that villain! It may not be too late! (*Starts up.*)

Stan. (*locking door*, L. H. 2 E.) It is! By this time she is on her

road from England — by your own order. (NORAH, *who has been watching the whole scene from conservatory*, C., *steps out, and stands at the table*, R. C.)

Sup. Would you detain me? We shall see.

Stan. Nay, then no time is to be lost. I'll burn — (*Turns round, and sees* NORAH.) Norah!

Sup. Miss O'Connor! (NORAH *takes deeds from* STANMORE, *with right hand, at back of table. — Picture and pause.*)

Nor. Are you aware that you are about to do what in Ireland we would call a very dirty bit of villainy?

Stan. Ahem! (*Aside*) This is devilish awkward. Nay, madam, I can explain.

Sup. Miss O'Connor, believe not but he is a villain!

Nor. Mr. Supple, he is my father's brother's son. If you have been wronged by him, he is a Daventry, and will right you. — I a Daventry, say it. (*Aside to* STANMORE) I have heard all. — I know all. I do not covet either your wealth or your title. Do but justice to yourself, and I am satisfied.

Stan. 'T is too late.

Enter SIR WILLIAM, D. R. H. 2 E.

Nor. Oh, Sir William! what is to be done? (X R. H.)

Dav. What is the matter?

Sup. Simply this, Sir William: If you will inspect the papers which Miss O'Connor —

Nor. 'T is unnecessary —

Sup. You will find that they deprive that person (*pointing to* STANMORE) of his title and estates. Nay, more —

Nor. Is not that enough?

Dav. Pray explain this.

Nor. Why, Mr. Supple has discovered some little irregularity in the family records, which shows that the estates of Stanmore devolve on me.

Dav. But the title?

Nor. Descends by the female line.

Dav. I'm in the dark still. Then if he is not, who the deuce is Earl of Stanmore?

Nor. I am.

Ar. (*without*, L. H.) Come along!

Nor. That 's Percy's voice! Bless him for this interruption!

Le. (*without*, L. H.) Ventre saint gris! You will pulls my head off!

Enter ARDENT, D. L. H. 2 E., *with his hand twisted into* LENOIR'S *neckcloth.*

SITUATIONS.

R. L. *Sir William. Norah. Supple. Stanmore. Ardent. Lenoir.* L. H.

Ar. Now, you kidnapping rascal! down on your knees, and confess the truth, — the truth, if you can! or I'll pulverize you, and have you shaken carefully through a sieve, but I will get at it!

Le. You will cut off my troat! Please to don't, and I will tell all.

Dav. What *does* this mean?

Ar. Why, I saw this scoundrel cashing a very large cheque at my bankers'. Naturally supposing it was either forged or stolen, I tracked him to a house in Gray's Inn — Stanmore's carriage in waiting — learned from the coachman its destination was Portsmouth — followed him in — listened — overheard him telling a poor girl the square full of lies: saying his master was in China, and persuading her to accompany him thither — she hesitated — he pressed — I entered — he bullied — I knocked him down, doubled him up, put him into my cab, and here he is!

Sup. And the lady, sir, the lady?

Ar. Is quite safe, sir. Now confess!

Stan. (*down* R. *of* ARDENT). No, that is for me to do. Release him, ardent. He was but a minion in my hands. (ARDENT *releases* LENOIR, *who looks, and sneaks off* D. L. H. 2 E.) I alone am guilty. Sir William Daventry, your wife is innocent of the slightest suspicion of falsehood towards you.

Dav. Kate!

Stan. I have been the cause of this unhappy quarrel. I do not ask for pardon. (SIR WILLIAM *stands transfixed.*) Mr. Supple, I have injured you. I wronged your child. She has deserved a more worthy love than mine; but still I vow she shall be made my wife by every law, human or divine! Norah, what the sharpest reproaches of the world could never have effected, your simple generosity has wrung from me: sorrow for my sin, not for my failure. Farewell.

[*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Nor. Eh? Well, I don't think that you will be wanted, after all, Mr. Supple. (SUPPLE X *to* L. H.)

Ar. Stay! (*Whispers* NORAH.)

Nor. That's a pretty piece of modesty, after all that you have done!

Ar. May I see him to-morrow about it?

Nor. No.

Ar. Exactly. Then between ten and eleven —

Sup. I understand. I shall be too happy. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Dav. (*absorbed*). Can I have wronged her?

Ar. Here comes Lady Daventry.

Nor. Shan't we be de trop?

Ar. That conservatory looks cool.

Nor. Very; but have you dined?

Ar. I'll never dine again till you forgive me!

Nor. There, (*giving her hand*) the Lent of your love shall not be long. But stay! (*assuming gravity, and pointing to* SIR WILLIAM) young man, look there. That may be your case three months hence. There are long matrimonial quarrels.

Ar. And short reconciliations, which make up for it.

Nor. So there are. Ah! I see the Shannon would n't put you out. (*They retire into the conservatory*, C.)

Dav. She is there! What shall I do? If I tell that I am alone to blame, I could not outlive the day. How shall I begin? Hush! I hear her — Niagara in miniature — a distant rumble.

Enter LADY DAVENTRY, D. R. H. 2 E. — *She approaches him, and sinks at his feet.*

Now her eyes are fixed on me like basilisks! Ahem! she 's devilish quiet! I 'll have a peep. (*He turns slowly round, looks up, and at last discovers her.*) Kate at my feet!

Lady D. (R. H.) I will ask Norah to remain.

Dav. (L. H.) No, no, no! No you shan't. Ha, ha! (*raising her*) my own Kate! I 'm the happiest old villain unhung for my brutalities to an angel of a wife. I 'll turn everybody out of the house you please. Ha, ha!

Lady D. I will never speak of the poor girl again.

Dav. Poor girl!

Lady D. I will be blind, deaf, dumb, lame — anything, rather than miserable! If you were a little wild —

Dav. I wild? I never was wild in all my life!

Lady D. Permit me to return you this love-letter, my dear.

Dav. Allow me to restore you this, my love. (*They eye the letters, and then each other; they then exchange, and read.* — ARDENT *and* NORAH *come down from conservatory.*)

SITUATIONS.

R. H. *Norah.* *Ardent.* *Lady Daventry.* *Sir William.* L. H.

Nor. (R. H.) Wonderfully quiet, considering —

Ar. (R. C.) The calm after a storm.

Dav. (*reading*). "*Dearest William — promise to return — conceal our marriage — fond wife!*" Why, I never saw a line of this before!

Lady D. (*reading*). "*Loveliest of created beings! I adore you to distraction!*"

Ar. Hallo! that 's not original. I remember that line somewhere. Permit me. (*Taking letter.*) That is my letter!

Lady D. Explain it.

Ar. Nay, I leave that for the eloquent lips of Miss O'Connor. (*Gives it.*)

Dav. What, is this yours too? Oh, take your wife and family too. (X C., *giving letter.*)

Ar. Allow me. (*Looks at letter.*) Stanmore gave me that.

Nor. I see it all! — the identity of names.

Lady D. What a fool have I been!

Dav. No you haven't. 'T was I; — I am a fool.

Lady D. 'T was all my fault.

Dav. No, it was not.

Lady D. Yes, it was.

Dav. I say it was not! And damme, but I 'll quarrel all over again, if you won't let it be my fault. And was it all for jealousy of me? Oho! ha, ha!

Lady D. Would you laugh at me?

Dav. No; but jealous of *me!* What a delicious idea! How she must have loved me, to hate me so damnably! Ha, ha!

Enter EUSTON, D. L. H. 2 E.

Eus. Mrs. Comfort and Major Fuss. [*Exit*, D. L. H. 2 E.

Nor. She has come to witness the deed of separation.

Dav. She 'll never survive this scene. Verdict — died of stagnant malice. We 'll make common cause.

Ar Yes, a common cause.

Enter MRS. COMFORT *and* FUSS, D. L. H. 2 E.

Mrs. C. (X *to* LADY DAVENTRY). My dear Lady Daventry, how shocked I am to hear of this disgraceful separation ! Allow me to say that an entire explanation — even a remission of his sins — is better than separation. People talk so. (X *to* L. H.)

Dav. She has anticipated your advice. (*Puts his arm round* LADY DAVENTRY'S *waist. Aside*) This must be torture to her. And now — (*kisses her*) — that 's wormwood.

Ar. (*kissing* NORAH). Yes, that 's wormwood. How do you like wormwood ?

Nor. What 's that ?

Ar. Hush ! It 's only wormwood, to annoy her. Look, now — see — watch. (*Kisses her.*)

Nor. Percy !

Ar. It 's all in the common cause. Nice wormwood.

Mrs. C. Why, major, there 's a — um — seems to be a common cause.

Fuss. Does it ? (*Looks round.*) Ay, so it does.

Mrs. C. (*aside*). I see ; he can't remember. (*Aloud*) Why, you all seem to be kissing at me. One would think you imagined this reconciliation annoyed me. Bless you all, I love to see a good making-up, as well as a fine quarrel. It gives one something to talk about. Do you think I would have permitted this separation, for the honor of our sex ? No. Come, Sir William, your ward seems to be reconciled, as well as you.

Dav. Ay — can I do anything to make you two miserable ? (*Getting* ARDENT *towards* R. H., *and* X *between him and* NORAH.)

Nor. (R. H.) No, thank you, cousin. As we thought you had enough to manage, we have settled all that very comfortably without you.

Dav. (R. C.) Oh ! have you ? Are you aware, sir, that I am that young lady's guardian ?

Ar. (C.) Am I aware ?

Nor. Is he aware ? My dear cousin ! Why, he means you to give the breakfast.

Dav. Oh ! you have settled that.

Ar. Yes ; and we 'll borrow Greenoaks afterwards.

Dav. Ha, ha ! Well. (*To* ARDENT) Come here, you young thunderbolt ; (*to* NORAH) and you, you flash of lightning. — You will have a hurricane for your son and heir. (*Joins their hands, and gets* L. *of* ARDENT.)

Fuss (*aside to* MRS. COMFORT, *on* L. H., *to whom he has been whispering*). Shall I ? I will. Ahem ! (*Aloud*) Mrs. Comfort thinks — (*Join hands, and* X *to* LADY DAVENTRY.)

Mrs. C. No I don't.

Fuss. Don't you ? I thought you did.

Mrs. C. (L. C.) No ; you — you.

Fuss. (L. H.) Oh yes — I forgot. I — I — what d'ye call it ? — that as there will be two marriages — there might be one ceremony.

Dav. } How so?
Ar. }

Fuss. Dear me! I quite omitted. Permit me to introduce you to the future Mrs. — a — a — Major — what 's my name?

Mrs. C. Fuss.

Fuss. Oh! ah! yes; so it is. I thought it was Comfort. I 'll introduce you to Mrs. Major Fuss.

Ar. Capital! One ceremony. It will double the joy.

Fuss. Yes; and it will halve the expense. When shall it be?

Ar. Ay; the sooner the better.

Nor. Come, Mrs. Comfort, make the major happy.

Fuss. Name the very earliest day?

Mrs. C. Ah, major! it is an extremely delicate subject.

Fuss. Not a moment is to be lost.

Mrs. C. Not before to-morrow, surely?

Fuss. To-morrow! (*Aside*) That 's double quick time.

Nor. Major, I congratulate you.

Fuss. Oh, spare my blushes!

Nor. Upon what? (*Points to* MRS. COMFORT.)

Mrs. C. But a marriage in the middle of the season is not quite en règle, is it?

Nor. Why not?

Mrs. C. To give up the opera, Almac's, and Ascot, for solitude, Tunbridge Wells, and donkeys!

Fuss. No sacrifice, dear, to give up donkeys. Have you not me?

Lady D. Besides, Norah, you have not been to court yet.

Nor. I rather think I have; and here 's the consequences. (*Slips her arm through* ARDENT'S.)

Dav. Well, take 'em, and this piece of advice: remain in town; for believe me, the pure flame of love is often smothered by that fatal folly of its first excess — the honeymoon. Ladies, be wise, and content to know that there is one realm bequeathed to you by Nature, where you have ever held sole sway: 'tis Home, — a simple word, unknown in any language but our own. Ah! may we never lose it. — 'T is your title-deed to our affections; for amidst the toil of trade, the labors of state, ay, and amidst the very lures of dissipation, the heart-strings are still held by the patient, lovely watcher who sits by her husband's fireside.

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